













L.M.

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"He passed in front of the bench, upright and firm,  
but red up to the ears."

# LES MISÉRABLES

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VOL II

ILLUSTRATED BY A A DIXON



LONDON & GLASGOW  
COLLINS' CLEAR TYPE PRESS





## CHAPTER LXX

IN a few days Marius was a friend of Courfeyrac. Marius by the side of Courfeyrac breathed freely, a great novelty for him. Courfeyrac asked him no questions, and did not even think of doing so, for at that age faces tell everything at once, and words are unnecessary. One morning, however, Courfeyrac suddenly asked him the question :

"By the way, have you any political opinions?"

"What do you mean?" said Marius.

"What are you?"

"Bonapartist—democrat."

"The gray colour of the reassured mouse," Courfeyrac remarked.

On the next day he led Marius to the Café Musain, and whispered in his ear with a smile, "I must introduce you to the Revolution," and he led him to the room of the Friends of the A B C. He introduced him to his companions, saying in a low voice, "a pupil," which Marius did not at all comprehend. Marius had fallen into a mental wasps' nest, but though he was silent and grave, he was not the less winged and armed.

Marius, hitherto solitary, and inclining to soliloquies and asides through habit and taste, was somewhat startled by the swarm of young men around him. The tumultuous movement of all these minds at liberty and at work made his ideas whirl. He heard philosophy, literature, art, history, and religion spoken of in an unexpected way; he caught a glimpse of strange aspects, and as he did not place them in perspective, he was not sure that he was not gazing at chaos. On giving up his grandfather's opinions for those of his father, he believed himself settled; but he now suspected, anxiously, and not daring to confess it to himself, that it was not so. It seemed as if there was no "sacred things" for these young men, and Marius heard singular remarks about all sorts of matters which were offensive to his still timid mind. For instance, it happened accidentally that Marius passed along the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau between Enjolras and Courfeyrac, and the latter seized his arm.

"Pay attention! this is the Rue Plûtrière, now called

Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, on account of a singular family that lived here sixty years back, and they were Jean Jacques and Thérèse. From time to time little creatures were born; Thérèse fondled them, and Jean Jacques took them to the Foundling."

And Enjolras reproved Courfeyrac.

"Silence before Jean Jacques! for I admire that man. I grant that he abandoned his children, but he adopted the people."

Not one of these young men ever uttered the words: the Emperor. Jean Prouvaire alone sometimes said Napoleon; all the rest spoke of Bonaparte. Enjolras pronounced it Buonaparte. Marius was confusedly astonished. *Initium sapientiæ.*

One of the conversations among the young men at which Marius was present, and in which he mingled now and then, was a thorough shock for his mind. It came off in the back room of the Café Musain, and nearly all the Friends of the A B C were collected on that occasion, and the chandelier was solemnly lighted. They talked about one thing and another, without passion and with noise. With the exception of Enjolras and Marius, who were silent, each harangued somewhat haphazard. Conversations among chums at times display these peaceful tumults. It was a game and a pell-mell as much as a conversation; words were thrown and caught up, and students were talking in all the four corners.

No female was admitted into this back room, excepting Louison, the washer-up of cups, who crossed it from time to time to go from the wash-house to the "laboratory."

The collision of young minds has this admirable thing about it, that the spark can never be foreseen or the lightning divined. What will shoot forth presently? no one knows. The burst of laughter is heard, and at the next moment seriousness makes its entrance. A stern thought, which strangely issued from a clash of words, suddenly flashed through the medley in which Grantaire, Bahorel, Prouvaire, Bossuet, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac were blindly slashing and pointing. How is it that a phrase suddenly springs up in conversation, and underlines itself at once in the attention of those who trace it? as we have just said, no one knows. In the midst of the general confusion Bossuet concluded some remark he made to Combeferre with the date: "June 18, 1815, Waterloo."



## LES MISÉRABLES.

At this name of Waterloo, Marius, who had been leaning over a glass of water, removed his hand from under his chin, and began looking intently at the company.

"Pardieu!" Courfeyrac exclaimed (*Parbleu* at this period was beginning to grow out of fashion). "That number eighteen is strange, and strikes me, for it is Bonaparte's fatal number. Place Louis before and Brumaire behind, and you have the man's whole destiny, with this expressive peculiarity, that the beginning has its heel gyved by the end."

Enjolras, who had hitherto been dumb, now broke the silence, and said:

"Courfeyrac, you mean that the crime is urged by the expiation."

This word *crime* exceeded the measure which Marius, who was already greatly affected by this sudden reference to Waterloo, could accept. He rose, walked slowly to the map of France hanging on the wall, on the bottom of which could be seen an island in a separate compartment; he placed his finger on this and said:

"Corsica, a small island, which made France very great."

This was the breath of frozen air; all broke off, for they felt that something was about to begin. Bahorel, who was assuming a victorious attitude in answering Bossuet, gave it up in order to listen; and Enjolras, whose blue eye was fixed on no one and seemed to be examining space, answered without looking at Marius:

"France requires no Corsica to be great. France is great because she is France. *Quia nominor leo.*"

Marius felt no desire to give way; he turned to Enjolras, and his voice had a strange vibration, produced by his internal emotion.

"Heaven forbid that I should diminish France; but it is not diminishing her to amalgamate Napoleon with her. Come, let us talk. I am a new-comer among you, but I confess that you astonish me. Where are we? who are we? who are you? who am I? Let us come to an understanding about the Emperor. I hear you call him Buonaparte, laying a stress on the *u*, like the Royalists, but I must tell you that my grandfather does better still, for he says, 'Buonaparté.' I fancied you young men, but where do you keep your enthusiasm, and what do you do with it? whom do you admire, if it is not the Emperor?"



and what more do you want? if you will not have that great man, what great man would you have? He had everything, he was complete, and in his brain was the cube of human faculties. He made codes like Justinian, and dictated like Cæsar; his conversation blended the lightning of Pascal with the thunder of Tacitus; he made history and wrote it, and his bulletins are Iliads; he combined the figures of Newton with the metaphor of Mahomet. He left behind him in the East words great as the Pyramids, at Tilsit he taught majesty to Emperors, at the Academy of Sciences he answered Laplace, at the Council of State he held his own against Merlin, he gave a soul to the geometry of some and to the sophistry of others, for he was a legist with the lawyers, a sidereal with the astronomers. Like Cromwell, blowing out one of two candles, he went to the Temple to bargain for a curtain tassel; he saw everything, knew everything, but that did not prevent him from laughing heartily by the cradle of his new-born son. And, all at once, startled Europe listened, armies set out, parks of artillery rolled along, bridges of boats were thrown over rivers, clouds of cavalry galloped in the hurricane, and shouts, bugles, and the crashing of thrones could be heard all around. The frontiers of kingdoms oscillated on the map, the sound of a superhuman sword being drawn from its scabbard could be heard, and he was seen, standing erect on the horizon, with a gleam in his hand, and a splendour in his eyes, opening in the thunder his two wings, the Grand Army and the Old Guard. He was the archangel of war."

All were silent, and Enjolras hung his head. Silence always produces to some extent the effect of acquiescence, or a species of setting the back against the wall. Marius, almost without drawing breath, continued with increased enthusiasm:

"Let us be just, my friends! What a splendid destiny it is for a people to be the empire of such an Emperor, when that people is France and adds its genius to the genius of that man! To appear and reign; to march and triumph; to have as bivouacs every capital; to select grenadiers and make kings of them; to decree the downfall of dynasties; to transfigure Europe at double-quick step; to feel when you threaten that you lay your hand on the sword-hilt of God; to follow, in one man, Hannibal, Cæsar, and Charlemagne; to be the people of a ruler

who accompanies your every daybreak with the brilliant announcement of a battle gained; to be aroused in the morning by the guns of the Invalides; to cast into the abysses of light prodigious words which are eternally luminous — Marengo, Arcola, Austerlitz, Jena, and Wagram! — to produce at each moment on the zenith of centuries constellations of victories; to make the French Emperor a pendant of the Roman Empire; to be the great nation, and give birth to the great army; to send legions all over the world, as the mountain sends its eagles in all directions to conquer, rule, and crush; to be in Europe a people gilt by glory; to sound a Titanic flourish of trumpets through history; to conquer the world twice, by conquest and by amazement—all this is sublime, and what is there greater?"

"To be free," said Combeferre.

Marius in his turn hung his head. This simple and cold remark had traversed his epical effusion like a steel blade, and he felt it fainting away within him. When he raised his eyes, Combeferre was no longer present; probably satisfied with his reply to the apotheosis, he had left the room, and all, excepting Enjolras, had followed him. Enjolras, alone with Marius, was looking at him gravely. Marius, however, having slightly collected his ideas, did not confess himself defeated, and he was in all probability about to begin afresh upon Enjolras, when he suddenly heard some one singing on the staircase. It was Combeferre, and this is what he sung.

" Si César m'avait donné  
La gloire et la guerre,  
Et qu'il me fallût quitter  
L'amour de ma mère,  
Je dirais au grand César :  
Reprends ton sceptre et ton char,  
J'aime mieux ma mère, ô gué !  
J'aime mieux ma mère ! "

The tender and solemn accent with which Combeferre sang this couplet imparted to it a species of strange grandeur. Marius, with his eye pensively fixed on the ceiling, repeated almost mechanically "my mother?"

At this moment he felt Enjolras' hand on his shoulder.

"Citizen," said Enjolras to him, "my mother is the Republic."



## CHAPTER LXXI.

THAT evening left Marius in a profound agitation, with a sorrowful darkness in his soul. He felt what the earth probably feels when it is opened by the ploughshare that the grain may be deposited; it only feels the wound, and the joy of giving birth does not come until later.

Marius was gloomy. He had only just made himself a faith, and must he reject it again? He declared to himself that he would not: he resolved not to doubt, and began doubting involuntarily. To stand between two religions, one of which you have not yet lost, and the other which you have not yet entered, is unendurable, and twilight only pleases batlike souls. Marius had an open eye-ball and wanted true light; and the semi-lustre of doubt hurt him. Whatever might be his desire to remain where he was and cling to it, he was invincibly constrained to continue, to advance, to think, to go further. Whither would this lead him? He feared lest, after taking so many steps which had drawn him near his father, he was now going to take steps which would carry him away from him. His discomfort increased with all the reflections that occurred to him, and an escarpment became formed around him. He agreed neither with his grandfather nor his friends; he was daring for the one and behind-hand for the others; and he found himself doubly isolated, on the side of old age and on the side of youth. He left off going to the Café Musain.

In the troubled state of his conscience he did not think at all of certain serious sides of existence, but the realities of life will not allow themselves to be forgotten, and so they suddenly came to jog his memory. One morning the landlord came into Marius' room, and said to him:

"Monsieur Courfeyrac is responsible for you?"

"Yes."

"But I am in need of money."

"Ask Courfeyrac to come and speak with me," said Marius.

When Courfeyrac arrived the landlord left them, and Marius told his friend what he had not dreamed of telling him yet,—that he was, so to speak, alone in the world, and had no relations.

"What will become of you?" said Courfeyrac.

"I do not know," Marius answered.

"What do you intend doing?"

"I do not know."

"Have you any money?"

"Fifteen francs."

"Are you willing to borrow from me?"

"Never."

"Have you clothes?"

"There they are."

"Any jewellery?"

"A gold watch."

"I know a dealer in clothes who will take your overcoat and a pair of trousers."

"Very good."

"You will only have a pair of trousers, a waistcoat, a hat, and coat left."

"And my boots."

"What? you will not go barefoot? what opulence!"

"That will be enough."

"I know a jeweller who will buy your watch."

"All right."

"No, it is not all right; what will you do after?"

"Anything I can that is honest."

"Do you know English?"

"No."

"Or German?"

"No."

"All the worse."

"Why so?"

"Because a friend of mine, a publisher, is preparing a sort of encyclopædia, for which you could have translated English or German articles. The pay is bad, but it is possible to live on it."

"I will learn English and German."

"And in the meanwhile?"

"I will eat my clothes and my watch."

The clothes-dealer was sent for, and gave twenty francs for the coat and trousers; next they went to the jeweller's who bought the watch for forty-five francs.

"That's not so bad," said Marius to Courfeyrac, on returning to the hotel; "with my fifteen francs that makes eighty."

"And your bill here?" Courfeyrac observed.

"Oh, I forgot that," said Marius.



The landlord presented his bill, which Marius was bound to pay at once ; it amounted to seventy francs.

"I have ten francs left," said Marius.

"The deuce," Courfeyrac replied ; "you will spend five francs while learning English, and five while learning German. That will be swallowing a language very quickly, or a five-franc piece very slowly."

Aunt Gillenormand, who was not a bad-hearted woman in sad circumstances, discovered her nephew's abode ; and one morning, when Marius returned from college, he found a letter from his aunt and the "sixty pistoles," that is to say, six hundred francs in gold, in a sealed-up box. Marius sent the thirty louis back to his aunt with a respectful note, in which he stated that he would be able in future to take care of himself—at that moment he had just three francs left. The aunt did not tell grandpapa of this refusal, through fear of raising his exasperation to the highest pitch ; besides, had he not said, "Never mention that blood-drinker's name in my presence." Marius quitted the Hotel of the Porte St. Jacques, as he was unwilling to contract debt.

Life became stern to Marius. Eating his clothes and his watch was nothing, but he also went through that indescribable course which is called "champing the bit." This is a horrible thing, which contains days without bread, nights without sleep, evenings without candle, a house without fire, weeks without work, a future without hope, a threadbare coat, an old hat at which the girls laugh, the door which you find locked at night because you have not paid your rent, the insolence of the porter and the eating-house keeper, the grins of neighbours, humiliations, dignity trampled under foot, disgust, bitterness, and desperation. Marius learnt how all this is devoured, and how it is often the only thing which a man has to eat. At that moment of life when a man requires pride because he requires love, he felt himself derided because he was meanly dressed, and ridiculous because he was poor. At the age when youth swells the heart with an imperial pride, he looked down more than once at his worn-out boots, and knew the unjust shame and burning blushes of wretchedness. It is an admirable and terrible trial, from which the weak come forth infamous and the strong sublime. It is the crucible into which destiny throws a man whenever it wishes to have a scoundrel or a demigod. For there are many great deeds done in the small struggles of life.



There was a time in Marius' life when he swept his own landing, when he bought a halfpennyworth of Brie cheese of the fruiterer, when he waited till nightfall to go into the baker's and buy a loaf, which he carried stealthily to his garret as if he had stolen it. At times there might have been seen slipping into the butcher's shop at the corner among the gossiping cooks who elbowed him, a young awkward man with books under his arm, who had a timid and frightened air, who, on entering, removed his hat from his dripping forehead, made a deep bow to the astonished butcher's wife, another to the foreman, asked for a mutton-chop, paid three or four pence, wrapped the chop in paper, placed it under his arm between two books, and went away. It was Marius, and on this chop, which he cooked himself, he lived for three days. On the first day he ate the lean, on the second he ate the fat, and on the third he gnawed the bone. Several times did Aunt Gillenormand make overtures and send him the sixty pistoles, but Marius always returned them, saying that he wanted for nothing.

He was still in mourning for his father when the revolution we have described took place within him, and since then he had not left off black clothes; but the clothes left him. A day arrived when he had no coat, though his trousers would still pass muster. What was he to do? Courfeyrac, to whom he on his side had rendered several services, gave him an old coat. For thirty sous Marius had it turned by some porter, and it became a new coat. But it was green, and Marius henceforth did not go out till nightfall, which caused his coat to appear black. As he still wished to be in mourning, he wrapped himself in night.

Through all this he contrived to pass his examination. He was supposed to inhabit Courfeyrac's rooms, which were decent, and where a certain number of legal tomes, supported by broken-backed volumes of novels, represented the library prescribed by the regulations. He had his letters addressed to Courfeyrac's lodgings. When Marius was called to the bar he informed his grandfather of the fact in a cold letter, which, however, was full of submission and respect. M. Gillenormand took the letter with a trembling hand, read it, tore it in four parts, and threw them into the basket. Two or three days later, Mlle Gillenormand heard her father, who was alone in his room, talking aloud, which always happened when he was agitated. She listened and heard the old gentleman say, "If you were not an ass,



you would know that you cannot be a baron and a lawyer at the same time."

It is with misery as with everything else, it gradually becomes endurable. A man vegetates, that is to say, is developed in a certain poor way, which is, however, sufficient for life. This is the sort of existence which Marius Pontmercy had secured.

He had got out of the narrowest part, and the defile had grown slightly wider before him. By labour, courage, perseverance, and will, he contrived to earn about seven hundred francs a year by his work. He had taught himself English and German, and, thanks to Courfeyrac, who introduced him to his friend the publisher, he filled the modest post of hack in his office. He wrote prospectuses, translated newspapers, annotated editions, compiled biographies, and one year with the other, his net receipts were seven hundred francs. He lived upon them—how? not badly as we shall show.

Marius occupied at No. 50-52, for the annual rent of thirty francs, a garret without a fireplace, which was called a "cabinet," and only contained the indispensable articles of furniture, and this furniture was his own. He paid three francs a month to the old principal lodger for sweeping out his room, and bringing him every morning a little hot water, a new-laid egg, and a halfpenny roll. On this roll and egg he breakfasted, and the outlay varied from two to four sous according as eggs were dear or cheap. At six in the evening he went to the Rue St. Jacques, to dine at Rousseau's, exactly opposite Basset's, the print-shop, at the corner of the Rue des Mathurins. He did not take soup, but he ordered a plate of meat for six sous, half a plate of vegetables for three sous, and dessert three sous. For three sous he had as much bread as he liked, and for wine, he drank water. On paying at the bar, where Madame Rousseau, at that period a fat and good-looking dame, was majestically enthroned, he gave a sou for the waiter, and Madame Rousseau gave him a smile. Then he went away; for sixteen sous he had a smile and a dinner.

Thus, with breakfast four sous, dinner sixteen, his food cost him three hundred and sixty-five francs a year. Add thirty francs for rent, and the thirty-six francs for the old woman, and a few minor expenses, and for four hundred and fifty francs Marius was fed, lodged, and served. His clothes cost him a hundred francs, his linen fifty, his

washing fifty; the whole did not exceed six hundred and fifty francs. He had fifty left, and was rich: at times he would lend ten francs to a friend, and Courfeyrac once actually borrowed sixty francs of him. As for firing, as Marius had no chimney, he "simplified" it. Marius always had two complete suits; one old, for everyday wear, and the other new, for special occasions, and both were black. He had but three shirts, one on, one in the drawer, and one at the wash, and he renewed them as they became worn out. As they were usually torn, he had a fashion of buttoning up his coat to the chin.

It had taken Marius years to reach this flourishing condition, rude and difficult years, in which he underwent great struggles, but he had not given up for a single day. As regarded want, he had suffered everything and he had done everything except run into debt. He gave himself the credit of never having owed a farthing to any one, for to him debt was the beginning of slavery. He said to himself that a creditor is worse than a master; for a master only holds your person, while a creditor holds your dignity and may insult it. Sooner than borrow, he did not eat, and he had known many days of fasting. Knowing that unless a man is careful, reduction of fortune may lead to baseness of soul, he jealously watched over his pride. Many a remark or action which, under other circumstances, he would have regarded as deference, now seemed to him platitudes, and he refrained from them. He ventured nothing, as he did not wish to fall back; he had on his face a stern blush, and he was timid almost to rudeness. In all his trials he felt encouraged, and to some extent supported, by a secret force within him; for the soul helps the body and at times raises it, and is the only bird that upholds its cage.

By the side of his father's name, another name was engraved on Marius' heart, that of Thénardier. Marius, in his grave and enthusiastic nature, enveloped in a species of glory the man to whom he owed his father's life, that intrepid sergeant who saved his colonel among the balls and bullets of Waterloo. He never separated the memory of this man from that of his father, and he associated them in his veneration: it was a species of shrine with two steps, the high altar for the Colonel, the low one for Thénardier. What doubled the tenderness of his gratitude was the thought of the misfortune into which he knew that Thénardier had fallen, and was swallowed up. Marius had



learnt at Montfermeil the ruin and bankruptcy of the unfortunate landlord, and since then he had made extraordinary efforts to find his trail, and try to reach him in the frightful abyss of misery through which Thénardier had disappeared. Marius went everywhere: he visited Chelles, Bondy, Gournay, Nogent, and Lagny; and obstinately continued his search for three years, spending in these explorations the little money he saved. No one was able to give him the slightest information of Thénardier, and it was supposed he had gone to a foreign country. His creditors had sought him too, with less love, but with quite as much perseverance as Marius, and had been unable to lay hands on him. Marius accused and felt angry with himself for not succeeding in his search; it was the only debt the Colonel had left him, and he felt bound in honour to pay it. "What," he thought, "when my father lay dying on the battlefield, Thénardier contrived to find him in the midst of the smoke and grape-shot, and carry him off on his shoulders, although he owed him nothing, while I, who owe so much to Thénardier, am unable to come up with him in the shadow where he is dying of want, and in my turn bring him back from death to life. Oh, I will find him!" In fact, Marius would have given one of his arms to find Thénardier, and his last drop of blood to save him from want. To see Thénardier, do him some service, and say to him, "You do not know me, but I know you: I am here, dispose of me as you please," was his sweetest and most magnificent dream.

At this period Marius was twenty years of age. It was three years since he had left his grandfather's house. They remained on the same terms, without attempting a reconciliation or trying to meet. What good would it have been to meet?—to come into collision again? Which of them would have got the better? Marius was the bronze vessel, but Father Gillenormand was the iron pot.

We are bound to say that Marius was mistaken as to his grandfather's heart. He imagined that M. Gillenormand had never loved him, and that this sharp, harsh, laughing old gentleman, who cursed, shouted, stormed, and raised his cane, only felt for him at the most that slight and severe affection of the Gerontes in the play. Marius was mistaken; there are fathers who do not love their children; but there is not a grandfather who does not adore his grandson. In his heart, as we said, M. Gillenormand idolised Marius.



He idolised him, it is true, after his fashion, with an accompaniment of abuse and even of blows, but when the lad had disappeared he felt a black gap in his heart. He insisted upon his name not being mentioned, but regretted that he was so strictly obeyed. At the outset he hoped that this Bonapartist, this Jacobin, this terrorist would return; but weeks passed, months passed, years passed, and, to the great despair of M. Gillenormand, the drinker of blood did not reappear. "I could not do otherwise, though, than turn him out," the grandfather said; and asked himself, "If it were to be done again, would I do it?" His pride at once answered Yes, but his old head, which he silently shook, sorrowfully answered, No. He had his hours of depression, for he missed Marius, and old men require affection as much as they do the sun to warm them. However strong he might naturally be, the absence of Marius had changed something in him; for no consideration in the world would he have taken a step towards the "little scamp"; but he suffered. He lived in greater retirement than ever at the Marais; he was still gay and violent as of yore, but his gaiety had a convulsive harshness, as if it contained grief and passion, and his violence generally terminated with a sort of gentle and sombre depression. He would say to himself at times, "Oh, if he were to come back, what a hearty box of the ears I would give him!"

As for the aunt, she thought too little to love much; to her Marius was only a black and vague profile, and in the end she paid much less attention to him than to the cat or the parrot which she probably had. What added to Father Gillenormand's secret suffering was that he shut it up within himself, and did not allow it to be divined. His chagrin was like one of those newly invented furnaces which consume their own smoke. At times it happened that officious friends would speak to him about Marius, and ask, "How is your grandson, and what is he doing?" The old bourgeois would answer, with a sigh if he were sad, or with a flip to his frill if he wished to appear gay, "Baron Pontmercy is shabbily pleading in some county court."

While the old gentleman regretted, Marius applauded himself. As is the case with all good hearts, misfortune had freed him from bitterness; he thought of M. Gillenormand gently, but he was resolved never to accept anything from a man *who had been unjust to his father*. This was

the mitigated translation of his first indignation. Moreover, he was glad that he had suffered, and was still suffering, for he did so for his father.

Marius lived in solitude ; through the inclination he had to remain outside everything, and also through the commotion he had undergone, he held aloof from the society presided over by Enjolras. They remained excellent friends, and were ready to help each other when the opportunity offered, but nothing more. Marius had two friends, one, young Courfeyrac, the other, old M. Mabœuf, and he inclined to the latter. In the first place, he owed to him the revolution which had taken place in him, and his knowledge and love of his father : " He operated on me for the cataract," he would say. Certainly, this churchwarden had been decisive : but for all that, M. Mabœuf had only been in this affair the calm and impassive agent of Providence. He had enlightened Marius accidentally and unconsciously, just as a candle does which some one brings into a room, but he had been the candle, and not the some one. As for the internal political revolution which had taken place in Marius, M. Mabœuf was entirely incapable of understanding, wishing, or directing it. As we shall meet M. Mabœuf again, hereafter, a few remarks about him will not be useless.

## CHAPTER LXXII.

WHEN M. Mabœuf said to Marius, " I certainly approve of political opinions " he expressed the real state of his mind. All political opinions were a matter of indifference to him, and he approved of them all without distinction, that they might leave him at peace. M. Mabœuf's political opinion was to love plants passionately, and books even more. He possessed, like every body else, his termination in *ist*, without which no one could have lived at that day, but he was neither Royalist, Bonapartist, Chartist, Orleanist, nor Anarchist. He was a botanist.

He did not understand how men could come to hate each other for trifles like the Charter, democracy, legitimacy, monarchy, the republic, etc., when there were in the world all sorts of mosses, grasses, and plants which they could look at. He was very careful not to be useless : his having books did not prevent him reading them, and being a



botanist did not prevent him being a gardener. When he knew Colonel Pontmercy, there was this sympathy between them, that the Colonel did for flowers what he did for fruits. M. Mabœuf had succeeded in producing pears as sweet as those of St. Germain; it is one of those combinations from which sprang, as it seems, the autumn Mirabelle plum, which is still celebrated, and no less perfumed than the summer one. He attended mass more through gentleness than devotion, and because, while he loved men's faces but hated their noise, he found them at church congregated and silent. Feeling that he must hold some position in the State, he selected that of churchwarden. He had never succeeded in loving any woman so much as a tulip bulb, or any man so much as an Elzevir. He had long passed his sixtieth year, when some one asked him one day, "How is it that you never married?" "I forgot it," he said. When he happened to say—and to whom does it not happen?—"Oh, if I were rich!" it was not when ogling a pretty girl, like Father Gillenormand, but when contemplating a quarto. He lived alone with an old housekeeper; he was rather gouty, and when he slept, his old chalk-stoned fingers formed an arch in the folds of the sheets. He had written and published a *Flora of the Environs of Caunteret*, with coloured plates, a work of some merit, the plates of which he possessed and which he sold himself. People rang at his door in the Rue Mézières two or three times a day to buy a copy; he made a profit of about two thousand francs a year by the book, and that was nearly his whole fortune. Although poor, he had contrived by patience and privations, and with time, to form a valuable collection of all sorts of rare examples. He never went out without a book under his arm, and frequently returned with two. The sole ornaments of his four rooms on the ground-floor, which, with a small garden, formed his lodging, were herbals and engravings by old masters. The sight of a musket or a sabre froze him, and in his life he had never walked up to a cannon, not even at the Invalides. He had a tolerable stomach, a brother a curé, very white hair, no teeth left in his mouth or in his mind, a tremor all over him, a Picard accent, a childish laugh, and the air of an old sheep. With all that, he had no other friend among the living than an old bookseller at the Porte St. Jacques of the name of Royol; and the dream of his life was to naturalise indigo in France.



His maid-servant was also a variety of innocence. The good woman was an old maid, and Sultan, her tom-cat, filled her heart, and sufficed for the amount of passion within her. Not one of her dreams had ever gone so far as a man. She had never got beyond her cat—like him she had moustaches. She knew how to read, and M. Mabœuf had christened her Mother Plutarch.

M. Mabœuf had taken a fancy to Marius, because the young man, being young and gentle, warmed his old age without startling his timidity. Youth, combined with gentleness, produces on aged people the effect of sun without wind. When Marius was saturated with military glory, gun-powder, marches, and counter-marches, and all the prodigious battles in which his father gave and received such mighty sabre cuts, he went to see M. Mabœuf, who talked to him about the hero in his connection with flowers.

About the year 1830 his brother the curé died, and almost immediately after, as when night arrives, the entire horizon became dark for M. Mabœuf. The bankruptcy of a notary despoiled him of ten thousand francs—all he possessed of his brother's capital and his own—while the revolution of July produced a crisis in the book trade. In times of pressure the first thing which does not sell is a *Flora*, and that of the Environs of Caunteretz stopped dead. Weeks passed without a purchaser. At times M. Mabœuf started at the sound of the house bell, but Mother Plutarch would say to him sadly, "It is the water-carrier, sir." In a word, M. Mabœuf left the Rue Mézières one day, abdicated his office as church-warden, gave up St. Sulpice, sold a portion, not of his books, but of his engravings, for which he cared least, and installed himself in a small house on the Boulevard Mont Parnasse, where, however, he only remained three months, for two reasons—in the first place, the ground-floor and garden cost three hundred francs, and he did not dare set aside more than two hundred francs for rent; and secondly, as he was close to the Fatou shooting gallery, he heard pistol-shots, which he could not endure. He carried off his *Flora*, his copper-plates, his herbals, portfolios, and books, and settled down near the Salpêtrière, in a sort of hut, in the village of Austerlitz, where he rented for fifty crowns a year three rooms, a garden enclosed by a hedge, and a well. He took advantage of this removal to sell nearly all his furniture. On the day when he entered his



new house he was in very good spirits, and drove in with his own hands the nails on which to hang the engravings; he dug in his garden for the rest of the day, and at night, seeing that Mother Plutarch had an anxious look and was thoughtful, he tapped her on the shoulder and said with a smile, "We have the indigo." Only two visitors, the publisher and Marius, were allowed admission to this hut.

Marius felt a liking for this candid old man, who saw himself slowly assailed by poverty and yet was not depressed by it. Marius met Courfeyrac and sought M. Mabœuf—very rarely, however—once or twice a month at the most. Marius' delight was to take long walks alone, either on the external boulevards at the Champ de Mars, or in the least frequented walks of the Luxembourg. He often spent half a day in looking at a kitchen garden, the patches of lettuce, the fowls on the dungheap, and the horse turning the mill-wheel. Passers-by looked at him with surprise, and some thought his dress suspicious and his face dangerous, while it was only a poor young man thinking without an object. It was in one of these walks that he discovered the Maison Gorbeau, and the isolation and the cheapness tempting him, he took a room there. He was only known by the name of M. Marius.

Some of his father's old generals and old comrades invited him to come and see them, when they knew him, and Marius did not refuse, for they were opportunities to speak about his father. He called thus from time to time upon Count Pajol, General Bellavesne, and General Frérion at the Invalides. There was generally music and dancing, and on such evenings Marius put on his best suit; but he never went to such parties except on days when it was freezing tremendously hard, for he could not pay for a vehicle, and he would not go unless his boots were like looking-glasses. He would say at times, though not at all bitterly, "Men are so constituted that in a drawing-room you may have mud everywhere except on your boots. In order to give you a proper reception only one irreproachable thing is expected from you—is it your conscience? no, your boots."

About the middle of the year 1831 the old woman who waited on Marius told him that his neighbours, the wretched Jondrette family, were going to be turned out. Marius, who spent nearly his whole time out of doors, scarce knew that he had neighbours.

"Why are they turned out?" he asked.

"Because they do not pay their rent, and owe two quarters."

"How much is it?"

"Twenty francs," said the old woman.

Marius had thirty francs in reserve in a drawer.

"Here are twenty-five francs," he said to the woman; "pay the rent of the poor people, give them five francs, and do not tell them that the money comes from me."

### CHAPTER LXXIII.

MARIUS was now a fine-looking young man of medium height, with heavy jet-black hair, a lofty and intelligent forehead, open and impassioned nostrils, a sincere and calm air, and something haughty, pensive, and innocent was spread over his whole face. His profile, in which all the lines were rounded without ceasing to be firm, had that Germanic gentleness which entered France through Alsace and Lorraine, and that absence of angles which renders it so easy to recognise the Sicambri among the Romans, and which distinguishes the leonine from the aquiline race. He had reached the season of life when the mind of men is composed of depth and simplicity in nearly equal proportions. A serious situation being given, he had all that was necessary to be stupid, but, with one more turn of the screw, he could be sublime. His manner was reserved, cold, polite, and unexpansive; but, as his mouth was beautiful, his lips bright vermillion, and his teeth the whitest in the world, his smile corrected any severity in his countenance. At certain moments, this chaste forehead and voluptuous smile offered a strange contrast.

In the period of his greatest need he remarked that people turned to look at him when he passed, and he hurried away or hid himself, with death in his soul. He thought that they were looking at his shabby clothes and laughing at them; but the fact is, they were looking at his face, and thinking about it. This silent misunderstanding between himself and pretty passers-by had rendered him savage, and he did not select one from the simple reason that he fled from all. He lived thus indefinitely—stupidly, said Courfeyrac, who also added,—  
"Do not aspire to be venerable, and take one bit of advice,



my dear fellow. Do not read so many books, and look at the wenches a little more, for they have some good about them. Oh, Marius! you will grow brutalised if you go on shunning women and blushing."

On other occasions, Courfeyrac, when he met him, would say, "Good-morning, Abbé." When Courfeyrac had made any remark of this nature, Marius for a whole week would shun women, young and old, more than ever, and Courfeyrac into the bargain. There were, however, in the whole immense creation, two women whom Marius did not shun, or to whom he paid no attention. To tell the truth, he would have been greatly surprised had any one told him that they were women. One was the hairy-faced old woman who swept his room, and induced Courfeyrac to remark,—“Seeing that his servant wears her beard, Marius does not wear his;” the other was a young girl whom he saw very frequently and did not look at. For more than a year Marius had noticed in a deserted walk of the Luxembourg, the one which is bordered by the Parapet de la Pepinière, a man and a very young lady nearly always seated side by side at the most solitary end of the walk, near the Rue de l'Ouest. Whenever that accident, which mingles with the promenades of people whose eye is turned inwards, led Marius to this walk, and that was nearly daily, he met this couple there. The man seemed to be about sixty years of age; he appeared sad and serious, and the whole of his person presented the robust but fatigued appearance of military men who have retired from service. If he had worn a decoration, Marius would have said, “He is an old officer.” He looked kind but unapproachable, and never fixed his eye on that of another person. He wore blue trousers, a coat of the same colour, and a broad-brimmed hat, all of which were constantly new; a black cravat, and a quaker's, that is to say, dazzlingly white, but very coarse shirt. A grisette who passed him one day said, “What a clean old widower.” His hair was perfectly white.

The first time that the young girl who accompanied him sat down with him upon the bench, which they seemed to have adopted, she was about thirteen or fourteen, so thin as to be almost ugly, awkward, insignificant, and promising to have perhaps very fine eyes some day; but they were always raised to the old gentleman with a species of displeasing assurance. She wore the garb, at once old and childish, of boarders at a convent,—a badly-cut dress of



coarse black merino. They looked like father and daughter. Marius examined for two or three days this old man, who was not yet aged, and this little girl, who was not yet a maiden, and then paid no further attention to them. They, on their side, seemed not even to see him, and talked together with a peaceful and careless air. The girl talked incessantly and gaily, the old man spoke but little, and at times he fixed upon her eyes filled with ineffable paternity. Marius had formed the mechanical habit of walking in this alley, and invariably found them there. This is how matters went on :—

Marius generally arrived by the end of the walk furthest from the bench ; he walked the whole length, passed them, then turned back to the end by which he had arrived, and began again. He took this walk five or six times nearly every day in the week, but these persons and himself never even exchanged a bow. The man and the girl, though they appeared, and perhaps because they appeared, to shun observation, had naturally aroused to some little extent the attention of some students, who walked from time to time along La Pepinière ; the studious after lectures, the others after their game of billiards. Courfeyrac, who belonged to the latter, had watched them for some time, but finding the girl ugly, he got away from them very rapidly, firing at them like Parthian a sobriquet. Being solely struck by the dress of the girl and the old man's hair, he christened the former Mlle Lanoire, and the father Monsieur Leblanc, so that, as no one knew them otherwise, this name adhered to them in the absence of a better one. The students said, "Ah, M. Leblanc is at his bench," and Marius, like the rest, found it convenient to call this strange gentleman M. Leblanc. We will follow their example. Marius saw them nearly daily, at the same hour, during a year. He considered the man agreeable, but the girl rather dull.

In the second year, just at the point of our story which the reader has now reached, it happened that Marius broke off his daily walk in the Luxembourg, without exactly knowing why, and was nearly six months without setting foot in the garden. One day, however, he returned to it ; it was a beauteous summer day, and Marius was joyous as men are when the weather is fine. He felt as if he had in his heart all the birds' songs that he heard, and all the patches of blue sky, of which he caught a glimpse between the leaves. He went straight to "his" walk, and when he



reached the end he noticed the well-known couple seated on the same bench, but when he drew near he found that, while it was the same man, it did not seem to be the same girl. The person he now saw was a tall and lovely creature, possessing the charming outlines of the woman, at the precise moment when they are still combined with the most simple graces of the child—a fugitive and pure moment which can alone be rendered by the two words “fifteen years.” He saw admirable auburn hair, tinted with gilt veins, a forehead that seemed made of marble, cheeks that seemed made of a rose-leaf, and of a pale carnation hue, an exquisite mouth, from which a smile issued like a flash, and words like music, and a head which Raphael would have given to a Virgin, set upon a neck which Goujon would have given to a Venus. And, that nothing might be wanting in this ravishing face, the nose was not beautiful, but pretty, neither straight nor bent, neither Italian nor Greek, it was the Parisian nose, that is to say, something witty, fine, irregular, and pure, which is the despair of painters and the charm of poets.

When Marius passed her he could not see her eyes, which she constantly cast down; he only saw her long lashes, which revealed modesty. This did not prevent the lovely girl from smiling while she listened to the white-haired man who was speaking to her, and nothing could be so ravishing as this fresh smile with the downcast eyes. At the first moment Marius thought that it was another daughter of the old gentleman's, a sister of the former. But when the invariable habit of his walk brought him again to the bench, and he examined her attentively, he perceived that it was the same girl. In six months the girl had become a maiden, that was all, and nothing is more frequent than this phenomenon. There is a moment in which girls become roses instantly,—yesterday you left them children, to-day you find them objects of anxiety. This girl had not only grown; she had become idealised. As three days in April suffice to cover some trees with flowers, six months had sufficed to clothe her with beauty—her April had arrived. We sometimes see poor and insignificant persons suddenly wake up, pass from indigence to opulence, lay out money in all sorts of extravagance, and become brilliant, prodigal, and magnificent. The reason is that they have just received their dividends; and the girl had been paid six months' income.



And then she was no longer the boarding-school miss, with her plush bonnet, merino dress, thick shoes, and red hands; taste had come to her with beauty, and she was well dressed, with a species of simple, rich, and unaffected elegance. She wore a black brocade dress, a cloak of the same material, and a white crape bonnet; her white gloves displayed the elegance of her hand, which was playing with the ivory handle of a parasol, and her satin boot revealed the smallness of her foot; when you passed her, her whole toilette exhaled a youthful and penetrating perfume. As for the man, he was still the same. The second time that Marius passed, the girl raised her eyelids, and he could see that her eyes were of a deep cerulean blue, but in this veiled azure there was only the glance of a child. She looked at Marius carelessly, as she would have looked at the child playing under the sycamores, or the marble vase that threw a shadow over the bench; and Marius continued his walk, thinking of something else. He passed the bench four or five times, but did not once turn his eyes toward the young lady. On the following days he returned as usual to the Luxembourg; as usual he found the "father and daughter" there, but he paid no further attention to them. He thought no more of the girl now that she was lovely than he had done when she was ugly. He always passed very close to the bench on which she was sitting, but that was simply the result of habit.

One day the air was mild, the Luxembourg was flooded with light and shade, the sky was as pure as if the angels had washed it that morning, the sparrows were twittering shrilly in the foliage of the chestnut trees, and Marius opened his whole soul to nature. He was thinking of nothing, he loved and breathed, he passed by the bench, the young lady raised her eyes to him, and their two glances met. What was there this time in her look? Marius could not have said,—there was nothing and there was everything, it was a strange flash. She let her eyes fall, and he continued his walk. What he had just seen was not the simple and ingenuous eye of a child, but a mysterious gulf, the mouth of which had had opened and then suddenly closed again. There is a day on which every maiden looks in this way, and woe to the man on whom her glance falls!

This first glance of a soul which does not yet know itself is like dawn in the heavens; it is the awakening of something radiant and unknown. Nothing could render the

mysterious charm of this unexpected flash which suddenly illumines the adorable darkness, and is composed of all the innocence of the present and all the passion of the future. It is a sort of undecided tenderness, which reveals itself accidentally and waits ; it is a snare which innocence sets unconsciously, and in which it captures hearts without wishing or knowing it. It is a virgin who looks at you like a woman. It is rare for a profound reverie not to spring up wherever this flame falls ; all purity and all candour are blended in this heavenly and fatal beam, which possesses, more than the best-managed ogles of coquettes, the magic power of suddenly causing that dangerous flower, full of perfume and poison, called love, suddenly to expand in the soul.

On returning to his garret in the evening, Marius took a glance at his clothes, and perceived for the first time that he had been guilty of the extraordinary impropriety and stupidity of walking in the Luxembourg in his "everyday dress," that is to say, with a broken-brimmed hat, clumsy boots, black trousers, white at the knees, and a black coat pale at the elbows. The next day, at the accustomed hour, Marius took out of the drawers his new coat, his new trousers, his new hat, and his new boots ; he dressed himself in this complete panoply, put on gloves, an extraordinary luxury, and went off to the Luxembourg. On the road he met Courfeyrac, and pretended not to see him. Courfeyrac, on reaching home, said to his friends :

"I have just met Marius' new hat and new coat, and Marius inside them. He was going, I fancy, to pass some examination, for he looked so stupid."

On reaching the Luxembourg Marius walked round the basin and gazed at the swans ; then he proceeded toward "his" walk slowly, and as if with regret. He seemed to be at once forced and prevented from going, but he did not explain this to himself, and he fancied he was behaving as he did every day. On turning into the walk he saw M. Leblanc and the young lady at the other end, seated on "their" bench. He buttoned up his coat to the top, pulled it down so that it should make no creases, examined with some complacency the lustre of his trousers, and marched upon the bench. There was attack in this march, and assuredly a desire for conquest, and hence I say that he marched upon this bench, as I would say, Hannibal marched on Rome.



Still, all his movements were mechanical, and he had not in any way altered the habitual preoccupation of his mind and labours. He was thinking at this moment that the *Manuel des Baccalaureat* was a stupid book, and that it must have been edited by wondrous ignoramuses, who analysed as masterpieces of the human mind three tragedies of Racine and only one comedy of Molière. He had a shrill whistling in his ear, and while approaching the bench, he pulled down his coat, and his eyes were fixed on the maiden. He fancied that she filled the whole end of the walk with a vague blue light. As he drew nearer his pace gradually decreased. On coming within a certain distance of the bench, though still some distance from the end of the walk, he stopped, and did not know how it was that he turned back. The young lady was scarce able to notice him, and see how well he looked in his new suit. Still he held himself very erect, for fear any one behind might be looking at him.

He reached the opposite end, then returned, and this time approached a little nearer to the bench. He even got within the distance of three trees, but then he felt an impossibility of going further, and hesitated. He fancied he could see the young lady's face turned toward him; however, he made a great and manly effort, subdued his hesitation, and continued to advance. A few moments after he passed in front of the bench, upright and firm, but red up to the ears, and not daring to cast a glance either to the right or left, and with his hand thrust into his coat like a statesman. At the moment when he passed under the guns of the fort he felt his heart beat violently. She was dressed as on the previous day, and he heard an ineffable voice which must be "her" voice. She was talking quietly, and she was very beautiful; he felt it, though he did not attempt to look at her.

He passed the bench, went to the end of the walk which was close by, then turned and again passed the young lady. This time he was very pale, and his feelings were most disagreeable. He went away from the bench and the maiden, and while turning his back, he fancied that she was looking at him, and this made him totter. He did not again attempt to pass the bench; he stopped at about the middle of the walk and then sat down, a most unusual thing for him, taking side-glances, and thinking in the innermost depths of his mind that after all it was difficult for a person whose



white bonnet and black dress he admired to be absolutely insensible to his showy trousers and new coat. At the end of a quarter of an hour he rose, as if about to walk toward this bench which was surrounded by a halo, but he remained motionless. For the first time in fifteen months he said to himself that the gentleman who sat there daily with his daughter must have noticed him, and probably considered his assiduity strange. For the first time, too, he felt it was rather irreverent to designate this stranger, even in his own thoughts, by the nickname of M. Leblanc.

He remained thus for some minutes with hanging head, making sketches in the sand with the stick he held in his hand. Then he suddenly turned in the direction opposite the bench, and went home. That day he forgot to go to dinner; he noticed the fact at eight in the evening, and, as it was too late to go to the Rue St. Jacques, he ate a lump of bread. He did not retire till he had carefully brushed and folded up his coat.

Next day, Ma'am Bougon—so Courfeyrac called the old portress, principal lodger, and charwoman of No. 50-52, though her real name was Madame Bourgon, as we have stated, but that scamp of a Courfeyrac respected nothing—Ma'am Bougon, to her stupefaction, noticed that Marius again went out in his best coat. He returned to the Luxembourg, but did not go beyond his half-way bench; he sat down there, as on the previous day, regarding from a distance, and seeing distinctly, the white bonnet, the black dress, and, above all, the blue radiance. He did not move or return home till the gates of the Luxembourg were closed. He did not see M. Leblanc and his daughter go away, and hence concluded that they left the garden by the gate in the Rue de l'Ouest. Some weeks after, when reflecting on the subject, he could never remember where he dined that day. On the next day, the third, Ma'am Bougon received another thunder-stroke; Marius went out in his new coat. "Three days running!" she exclaimed. She tried to follow him, but Marius walked quickly, and with immense strides: it was a hippopotamus attempting to catch up a chamois.

Marius had gone to the Luxembourg, where M. Leblanc and the young lady were already. Marius approached as near to them as he could, while pretending to read his book, though still a long distance off, and then sat down on his bench, where he spent four hours in watching the sparrows,

which he fancied were ridiculing him, hopping about in the walk. A fortnight passed in this way; Marius no longer went to the Luxembourg to walk, but always to sit down in the same spot, without knowing why. Every morning he put on his new coat, not to be conspicuous, and he began again on the morrow. She was, decidedly, marvellously beautiful; the sole remark resembling a criticism that could be made was, that the contradiction between her glance, which was sad, and her smile, which was joyous, gave her face a slightly startled look, which at times caused this gentle face to become strange without ceasing to be charming.

On one of the last days of the second week Marius was as usual seated on his bench, holding in his hand an open book of which he had not turned a page for several months, when he suddenly started—an event was occurring at the end of the walk. M. Leblanc and his daughter had left their bench, the girl had taken her father's arm, and both were proceeding slowly toward the middle of the walk where Marius was. He shut his book, then opened it again and tried to read, but he trembled, and the halo came straight toward him. "Oh, heaven!" he thought, "I shall not have time to throw myself into an attitude." The white-haired man and the girl, however, advanced; it seemed to him as if this endured a century, and was only a second. "What do they want here?" he asked himself. "What! she is going to pass here; her feet will tread this sand, this walk, two paces from me?" He heard the soft measured sound of their footsteps approaching him, and he imagined that M. Leblanc was taking a wry glance at him. "Is this gentleman going to speak to me?" he thought. He hung his head, and when he raised it again they were close to him. The girl passed, and in passing looked at him,—looked at him intently, with a thoughtful gentleness which made Marius tremble from head to foot. It seemed to him as if she reproached him for keeping away from her so long, and was saying, "I have come instead." Marius was dazzled by these eyeballs full of beams and abysses. He felt that his brain was on fire. She had come toward him, what joy! and then, how she had looked at him! She appeared to him lovelier than she had ever been, lovely with a beauty at once feminine and angelic, a perfect beauty, which would have made Petrarch sing and Dante kneel. He felt as if he were floating in the blue sky, but, at



the same time, he was horribly annoyed because he had dust on his boots, and he felt sure that she had looked at his boots too.

He looked after her till she disappeared, and then he walked about the garden like a maniac. Marius had reached that startling and charming hour which commences great passions. A look had affected all this. When the mine is loaded, when the fire is ready, nothing is more simple, and a glance is a spark. It was all over; Marius loved a woman, and his destiny was entering upon the unknown.

Isolation, pride, separation from all things, a taste for nature, the absence of daily and material labour, the soul-struggles of chastity, and his benevolent ecstasy in the presence of creation, had prepared Marius for that possession which is called passion. His reverence for his father had gradually become a religion, and, like all religions, withdrew into the depths of the soul: something was wanting for the foreground, and love came. A whole month passed, during which Marius went daily to the Luxembourg: when the hour arrived nothing could stop him. "He is on duty," Courfeyrac said. Marius lived in ravishment, and it is certain that the young lady looked at him. In the end he had grown bolder, and went nearer the bench; still he did not pass in front of it, obeying at once the timid instincts and prudent instincts of lovers. He thought it advisable not to attract the father's attention, and hence arranged his stations behind trees and the pedestals of statues, with profound Machiavellism, so as to be seen as much as possible by the young lady and as little as possible by the old gentleman. At times he would be standing for half an hour motionless in the shadow of some Leonidas or Spartacus, holding in one hand a book, over which his eyes, gently raised, sought the lovely girl, and she, for her part, turned her charming profile toward him with a vague smile. While talking most naturally and quietly with the white-haired man, she fixed upon Marius all the reveries of a virginal and impassioned glance. It is an old and immemorial trick which Eve knew from the first day of the world, and which every woman knows from the first day of her life. Her mouth replied to the one and her eyes answered the other.

It must be supposed, however, that M. Leblanc eventually noticed something, for frequently when Marius arrived he



got up and began walking. He left their accustomed seat, and adopted the bench at the other end of the walk, close to the Gladiator, as if to see whether Marius would follow them. Marius did not understand it, and committed this blunder. The "father" began to become unpunctual, and no longer brought his "daughter" every day. At times he came alone, and then Marius did not stop, and this was another blunder. Marius paid no attention to these symptoms: from the timid phase he had passed by a natural and fatal progress into a blind phase. His love was growing, and he dreamed of it every night, and then an unexpected happiness occurred to him, like oil on fire, and redoubled the darkness over his eyes. One evening at twilight he found on the bench which "M. Leblanc and his daughter" had just quitted, a simple, unembroidered handkerchief, which, however, was white and pure, and seemed to him to exhale ineffable odours. He seized it with transport, and noticed that it was marked with the letters U. F. Marius knew nothing about the lovely girl, neither her family, her name, nor her abode; these two letters were the first thing of hers which he seized, adorable initials, upon which he at once began to erect his scaffolding. U. was evidently the Christian name: "Ursule!" he thought, "what a delicious name!" He kissed the handkerchief, smelt it, placed it on his heart during the day, and at night upon his lips to go to sleep.

"I can see her whole soul!" he exclaimed.

This handkerchief belonged to the old gentleman, who had simply let it fall from his pocket. On the following days, when Marius went to the Luxembourg, he kissed the handkerchief, and pressed it to his heart. The lovely girl did not understand what this meant, and expressed her surprise by imperceptible signs.

"O modesty!" said Marius.

Since we have uttered the word *modesty*, and as we conceal nothing, we are bound to say that on one occasion, however, through all his ecstasy "his Ursule" caused him serious vexation. It was on one of the days when she induced M. Leblanc to leave the bench and walk about. There was a sharp spring breeze which shook the tops of the plane trees; and father and daughter, arm in arm, had just passed in front of Marius, who rose and watched them, as was fitting for a man in his condition. All at once a puff of wind, more merry than the rest, and probably ordered to

do the business of spring, dashed along the walk, enveloped the maiden in a delicious rustling worthy of the nymphs of Virgil and the fauns of Theocritus, and raised her dress, that dress more sacred than that of Isis, almost as high as her garter. A leg of exquisite shape became visible. Marius saw it, and he was exasperated and furious. The maiden rapidly put down her dress, with a divinely startled movement, but he was not the less indignant. There was no one in the walk, it was true, but there might have been somebody; and if that somebody had been there? Is such a thing conceivable? what she had just done was horrible! Alas! the poor girl had done nothing, and there was only one culprit, the wind, but Marius was determined to be dissatisfied, and was jealous of his shadow.

When "his Ursule," after reaching the end of the walk, turned back with M. Leblanc, and passed in front of the bench on which Marius was sitting, he gave her a stern, savage glance. The girl drew herself slightly up, and raised her eyelids, which means, "Well, what is the matter now?" This was their first quarrel.

With the help of time every point grows blunted, and Marius' anger with "Ursule," though so just and legitimate, passed away. He ended by pardoning her, but it was a mighty effort, and he sulked with her for three days. Still, through all this, and owing to all this, his passion increased, and became insane.

We have seen how Marius discovered, or fancied he had discovered, that her name was Ursule. Appetite comes while loving, and to know that her name was Ursule was a great deal already, but it was little. In three or four weeks Marius had devoured this happiness and craved another; he wished to know where she lived. He had made the first fault in falling into the trap of the Gladiator's bench; he had committed a second by not remaining at the Luxembourg when M. Leblanc went there alone; and he now committed a third, an immense one—he followed "Ursule." She lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, in the most isolated part, in a new three-storeyed house of modest appearance. From this moment Marius added to his happiness of seeing her at the Luxembourg the happiness of following her home. His hunger increased; he knew what her name was, her Christian name at least, the charming, the real name of a woman; he knew where she lived, and he now wanted to know who she was. One evening, after following them



home and watching them disappear in the gateway, he went in after them, and valiantly addressed the porter.

"Is that the gentleman of the first floor who has just come in?"

"No," the porter answered, "it is the gentleman of the third floor."

Another step made! This success emboldened Marius.

"Front?" he asked.

"Our rooms all look on the street," said the porter.

"And what is the gentleman's position?" Marius continued.

"He lives on his property. He is a very good man, who does a deal of good to the wretched, though he is not rich."

"What is his name?" Marius added.

The porter raised his head and said:

"Do you happen to be a police spy, sir?"

Marius went off much abashed, but highly delighted, for he was progressing.

"Good," he thought, "I know that her name is Ursule, that she is the daughter of a retired gentleman, and that she lives there, on a third floor in the Rue de l'Ouest."

On the morrow M. Leblanc and his daughter made but a short appearance at the Luxembourg, and went away in broad daylight. Marius followed them to the Rue de l'Ouest, as was his habit, and on reaching the gateway M. Leblanc made his daughter go in first, then stopped, turned, and looked intently at Marius. The next day they did not come to the Luxembourg, and Marius waited in vain the whole day. At nightfall he went to the Rue de l'Ouest, and noticed a light in the third-floor windows, and he walked about beneath these windows till the light was extinguished. The next day there was no one at the Luxembourg. Marius waited all day, and then went to keep his night-watch under the windows. This took him till ten o'clock, and his dinner took care of itself, for fever nourishes the sick man, and love the lover. Eight days passed in this way, and M. Leblanc and his daughter did not again appear at the Luxembourg. Marius made sorrowful conjectures, for he did not dare watch the gateway by day: he contented himself with going at night to contemplate the reddish brightness of the window-panes. He saw shadows pass now and then, and his heart beat.

On the eighth day, when he arrived beneath the windows, there was no light. "What," he said to himself, "the

lamp is not lighted, can they have gone out?" He waited till ten o'clock, till midnight, till one o'clock, but no light was kindled at the third-floor windows, and nobody entered the house. He went away with very gloomy thoughts. On the morrow—for he only lived from morrow to morrow, and he had no to-day, so to speak—he saw nobody at the Luxembourg, as he expected, and at nightfall he went to the house. There was no light at the windows, the shutters were closed, and the third floor was all darkness. Marius rapped, walked in, and said to the porter:

"The gentleman on the third floor?"

"Gone away," the porter answered.

Marius tottered, and asked feebly:

"Since when?"

"Yesterday."

"Where is he living now?"

"I do not know."

"Then he did not leave his new address?"

"No."

And the porter, raising his eyes, recognised Marius.

"What? it's you, is it?" he said; "why, you really do keep a bright look-out."

## CHAPTER LXXIV.

A QUARTETTE of bandits, Babet, Gueulemer, Claquesous, and Montparnasse, governed, from 1830-1835, the lowest depths of Paris. Gueulemer was a Hercules out of place, and his den was the Arche-Marion sewer. He was six feet high, had lungs of marble, muscles of bronze, the respiration of a cavern, the bust of a colossus, and a bird's skull. You fancied you saw the Farnèse Hercules attired in ticking trousers and a cotton velvet jacket. Gueulemer built in this mould might have subdued monsters, but he had found it shorter to become one. A low forehead, wide temples, under forty years of age, rough short hair, and a bushy beard; from this you can see the man. His muscles demanded work, and his stupidity would not accept it: he was a great slothful strength, and an assassin through nonchalance. People believed him to be a Creole, and he had probably laid his hands upon Marshal Brune when massacred, as he was a porter at Avignon in 1815. From that stage he had become a bandit.



Babet's transparency contrasted with the meat of Gueulemer; he was thin and learned,—transparent but impenetrable: you might see the light through his bones, but not through his eyes. He called himself a chemist, and had played in the vaudeville at St. Mihiel. His trade was to sell in the open air plaster busts and portraits of the "chief of the State," and, in addition, he pulled teeth out. He had shown phenomena at fairs, and possessed a booth with a trumpet and the following show-board—"Babet, dentist, and member of the academies, performs physical experiments on metals and metalloids, extirpates teeth, and undertakes stumps given up by the profession. Terms—one tooth, one franc fifty centimes; two teeth, two francs; three teeth, two francs fifty centimes. Take advantage of the opportunity." (The last sentence meant, Have as many teeth pulled out as possible.) He was married and had children, but did not know what had become of wife or children: he had lost them, just as another man loses his handkerchief.

What was Claquesous? He was night; and never showed himself till the sky was bedaubed with blackness. In the evening he emerged from a hole, to which he returned before daybreak. Where was this hole? no one knew. In the greatest darkness, and when alone with his accomplices, he turned his back when he spoke to them. Was his name Claquesous? no: he said, "My name is Not-at-all." If a candle were brought in he put on a mask, and he was a ventriloquist in the bargain, and Babet used to say, "Claquesous is a night-bird with two voices." Claquesous was vague, wandering, and terrible: no one was sure that he had a name, for Claquesous was a nickname: no one was sure that he had a voice, for his stomach spoke more frequently than his mouth; and no one was sure that he had a face, as nothing had ever been seen but his mask. He disappeared like a ghost, and when he appeared he seemed to issue from the ground.

Montparnasse was a mournful being. He was a lad not yet twenty, with a pretty face, lips that resembled cherries, beautiful black hair, and the brightness of spring in his eyes. He had every vice, and aspired to every crime, and the digestion of evil gave him an appetite for worse. He was the gamin turned pickpocket, and the pickpocket had become a garrotter. He was genteel, effeminate, graceful, robust, active, and ferocious. The left-hand brim of his



hat was turned up to make room for the tuft of hair, in the style of 1829. He lived by robbery committed with violence, and his coat was cut in the latest fashion, though worn at the seams. Montparnasse was an engraving of the fashions, in a state of want, and committing murders. The cause of all the attacks made by this young man was a longing to be well dressed: the first grisette who said to him, "You are handsome," put the black spot in his heart, and made a Cain of this Abel. Finding himself good-looking, he wished to be elegant, and the first stage of elegance is idleness: but the idleness of the poor man is crime. Few garrotters were so grand as Montparnasse, and at the age of eighteen he had several corpses behind him. More than one wayfarer lay in the shadow of this villain with outstretched arms, and with his face in a pool of blood. Curled, pomaded, with his waist pinched in, the hips of a woman, the bust of a Prussian officer, the buzz of admiration of the girls of the boulevard around him, a carefully-tied cravat, a life-preserver in his pocket, and a flower in his buttonhole—such was this dandy of the tomb.

These four bandits formed a species of Proteus, winding through the police ranks and striving to escape the indiscreet glances of Vidocq "under various faces, trees, flame, and fountain," borrowing each other's names and tricks, asylums for one another, laying aside their personality as a man removes a false nose at a masquerade; at times simplifying themselves so as to be only one man, at others multiplying themselves to such an extent that Coco-Latour himself took them for a mob. These four men were not four men; they were a species of four-headed robber working Paris on a grand scale, the monstrous polyp of evil inhabiting the crypt of society. Owing to their ramifications and the subjacent network of their relations, Babel, Gueulemer, Claquesous, and Montparnasse had the general direction of all the villainies in the department of the Seine, and carried out upon the passers-by the low class of coups d'état. The finders of ideas in this style, the men with nocturnal imaginations, applied to them to execute them; the four villains were supplied with the canvas, and they produced the scenery. They were always in a position to supply a proportionate and proper staff for every robbery which was sufficiently lucrative and required a stout arm. If a crime were in want of persons to carry it out, they



sublet the accomplices, and they always had a band of actors at the service of all the tragedies of the caverns.

They generally met at nightfall, the hour when they awoke, on the steppes that border the Salpêtrière. There they conferred, and, as they had the twelve dark hours before them, they settled their employment. "Patron Minette" was the name given in the subterranean lurking-places to the association of these four men. In the old and fantastic popular language, which is daily dying out, Patron Minette signifies the morning, just as "between dog and wolf" signifies night. This appellation was probably derived from the hour when their work finished, for dawn is the moment for spectres to fade away and for bandits to part. These four men were known by this title. When the President of the Assizes visited Lacenaire in prison, he questioned him about a crime which the murderer denied. "Who committed it?" the President asked, and Lacenaire gave this answer, which was enigmatical for the magistrate, but clear for the police, "It is, perhaps, Patron Minette."

The plot of a play may be at times divined from the list of names, and a party of bandits may, perhaps, be appreciated in the same way. Here are the names to which the principal members of Patron Minette answered, exactly as they survive in special memoirs.

Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille; Brujon (there was a dynasty of Brujons, about whom we may still say a word); Boulatruelle, the roadmender, already introduced; Laveuve; Finistère; Homer-Hogu, a negro; Mardisoir; Dépêche; Fauntleroy, *alias* Bouquetière; Glorieux, a liberated convict; Barrecarrosse; *alias* Monsieur Dupont; L'esplanade-du-Sud; Poussàgrive, Carnagnolet; Kruideniers, *alias* Bizarro; Mangedentelle; Les-pieds-en-l'air; Demi-leard, *alias* Deux-milliards; etc. etc.

These names have faces, and express not merely beings, but species. Each of these names responds to a variety of the poisonous fungi which grow beneath human civilisation. These beings, very careful about showing their faces, were not of those whom we may see passing by day, for at that period, weary of their night wanderings, they went to sleep in the lime-kilns, the deserted quarries of Montmartre or Montrouge, or even in the snow. They ran to earth.

## CHAPTER LXXV.

SUMMER passed away, then autumn: winter arrived. Neither M. Leblanc nor the young girl had set foot again in the Luxembourg, while Marius had but one thought, that of seeing again this sweet and adorable face. He sought it ever, he sought it everywhere, but found nothing. He was no longer Marius, the enthusiastic dreamer, the resolute, ardent, and firm man, the bold challenger of destiny, the brain that built up future upon future, the young mind encumbered with plans, projects, pride, ideas, and resolves,—he was a lost dog.

Once he had a meeting which produced a strange effect upon him. In the little streets adjoining the Boulevard des Invalides he passed a man dressed like a workman, and wearing a deep-peaked cap, under which white locks peered out. Marius was struck by the beauty of this white hair, and looked at the man, who was walking slowly, and as if absorbed in painful meditation. Strange to say, he fancied that he could recognise M. Leblanc,—it was the same hair, the same profile, as far as the peak allowed him to see, and the same gait, though somewhat more melancholy. But why this workman's clothing? What was the meaning of this disguise? Marius was greatly surprised, and when he came to himself again his first impulse was to follow this man, for he might, perhaps, hold the clue which he had so long been seeking; at any rate, he must have a close look at the man, and clear up the enigma; but he hit on this idea too late, for the man was no longer there. He had turned into some side street, and Marius was unable to find him again. This meeting troubled him for some days, and then faded away. "After all," he said to himself, "it is probably only a resemblance."

Marius still lived in the Gorbeau tenement. He paid no attention to anybody there. At this period, in truth, there were no other tenants in the house but himself and those Jondrettes whose rent he had once paid, without ever having spoken, however, to father, mother, or daughters. The other lodgers had removed, were dead, or turned out for not paying their rent. On one day of this winter the sun had shown itself a little during the afternoon—it was the second of February, old Candlemas day—and Marius had just left his room, for night was falling. It was the hour to go and



dine, for he had been obliged to revert to that practice, such is the infirmity of ideal passions.

Marius slowly walked along the boulevard, in the direction of the Rue St. Jacques. He walked thoughtfully, with hanging head. All at once he felt himself elbowed in the fog. He turned and saw two girls in rags, one tall and thin, the other not quite so tall, who passed hurriedly, panting, frightened, and as if running away; they were coming toward him, and ran against him as they passed. Marius noticed in the twilight their livid faces, uncovered heads, dishevelled hair, ragged petticoats, and bare feet. While running they talked together, and the elder said:

"The slops came, and nearly caught me."

And the other answered, "I saw them, and so I bolted."

Marius understood that the police had nearly caught the two girls, and that they had managed to escape. They buried themselves beneath the trees behind him, and for a few minutes produced a sort of vague whiteness in the obscurity. Marius had stopped for a moment, and was just going on, when he noticed a small gray packet lying at his feet. He stooped down and picked it up; it was a sort of envelope, apparently containing papers.

"Why," he said, "these poor girls must have let it fall."

He turned back and called to them, but could not find them. He thought they must be some distance off, so he thrust the parcel into his pocket and went to dinner.

At night, as he undressed to go to bed, his hand felt in his coat pocket the parcel which he had picked up in the boulevard. He thought that it would be as well to open it, as the packet might contain the girls' address, if it belonged to them, or in any case the necessary information to restore it to the person to whom it belonged. He opened the envelope, which was unsealed, and which contained four letters, also unsealed. The addresses were on all four, and they exhaled a frightful perfume of tobacco. The first letter was addressed to *Madame, Madame la Marquise de Grucherau, on the Square opposite the Chamber of Deputies*. Marius said to himself that he would probably find the information he wanted, and as the letter was not sealed he could read it without impropriety. It was drawn up as follows:—

"MADAME LA MARQUISE,

"The virtue of kindness and piety is that which binds society most closely. Call up your Christian feelings,

and dain a glance of compasion at this unfortunate Spaniard and victim to his loyalty and atachment to the sacred cause of legitimacy, who shed his blood, devoted the whole of his fortune to defend this cause, and is now in the greatest misery. He does not doubt that you, honored lady, will grant some asistence to preserve an existence entirely painful for a soldier of honour and eddication, who is covered with wounds, and he reckons beforehand on the humanity which animates you, and the interest which your ladyship takes in so unhapy a nacion. His prayer will not be in vain, and His gratitude will retain her charming memory.

"With the most respectful feelings, I have the honour to be, madame,

"DON ALVARES, Spanish captain of cavvalry, a Royalist refugee in France, who is travelling for his country, and who wants the means to continue his jurney."

No address was attached to the signature, but Marius hoped to find it in the second letter, of which the superscription was: *To Madame, Madame la Comtesse de Montvernet, No. 9 Rue Cassette.* This is what Marius read:

"MY LADY COMTESS,

"It is a unhapy mother of a familly of six children, of which the yungest is only eight months old; I ill since my last confinement, deserted by my husband, and havving no ressource in the world, living in the most frightful indijance.

"Trusting in your ladyship, she has the honour to be, madame, with profound respect,

"ANTOINETTE BALIZARD."

Marius passed to the third letter, which was, like the preceding, a petition, and he read in it:

"Monsieur Pabourgeot, Elector, wholesale dealer in caps, Rue St. Denis, at the corner of the Rue Aux-Fers.

"I venture to adress this letter to you, to ask you to grant me the pretious favour of your sympathies, and to interest you in a litterary man, who has just sent a drama to the Théâtre Français. The subject is historical, and the scene takes place in Auvergne in the time of the Empire; the style, I believe, is natural, laconic, and may posess



some merit. There are couplets for singing at four places. The comic, the serious, and the unexpected elements are blended in it with a variety of characters, and a tinge of romance is lightly spread through the whole plot, which moves mysteriously, and the finale takes place amid several brilliant tableaux. My principal desire is to satisfy the desire which progressively animates society, that is to say, fashion, that capricious and vague whirligig which changes with nearly every wind.

"In spite of these qualities, I have reason to fear that jealousy and the selfishness of privileged authors may obtain my exclusion from the stage, for I am not unaware of the vexation which is caused to new-comers.

"Monsieur Pabourgeot, your just reputation as the enlightened protector of literary men, emboldens me to send to you my daughter, who will explain to you our indigent situation, wanting for bread and fire in this winter season. To tell you that I wish you to accept the homage which I desire to make to you of my drama, and all those that may succeed it, is to prove to you how much I desire the honour of sheltering myself under your ægis, and adorning my writings with your name. If you dain to honour me with the most modest offering, I will at once set to work writing a copy of verses, by which to pay you my debt of gratitude. These verses, which I will try to render as perfect as possible, will be sent to you before they are inserted in the beginning of the drama, and produced on the stage.

"My most respectful homage to Monsieur and Madame Pabourgeot, GENFLOT, man of letters.

"P.S.—If it was only forty sous. I apologise for sending my daughter, and not paying my respects personally, but sad reasons of dress do not allow me, alas! to go out."

Marius then opened the last letter, which was addressed to—*The Benevolent gentleman of the church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas*, and it contained the following few lines:—

"BENEVOLENT MAN,

"If you will dain to accompany my daughter you will witness a miserable calamity, and I will show you my certificates.

"At the sight of these documents your generous soul will be moved by a feeling of sensitive benevolence, for true philosophers always experience lively emotions.

"Allow, compassionate man, that a man must experience the most cruel want, and that it is very painful to obtain any relief, by having it attested by the authorities, as if a man were not at liberty to suffer and die of inanition, while waiting till our misery is relieved. Fate is too cruel to some and too lavish or protecting for others. I await your presence or your offering, if you daign to make one, and I beg you to believe in the grateful feelings with which I have the honour of being, really magnanimous sir,

"Your very humble and most obedient servant,

"P. FABANTOU, dramatic artist."

After reading these four letters Marius did not find himself much advanced. In the first place not one of the writers gave his address; and next, they appeared to come from four different individuals, Don Alvarez, Madame Balizard, Genlot the poet, and Fabantou the dramatic artist; but these letters offered this peculiarity, that they were all in the same handwriting. What could be concluded from this, save that they came from the same person? Moreover—and this rendered the conjecture even more probable—the paper, which was coarse and yellow, was the same for all four, the tobacco smell was the same, and though an attempt had evidently been made to vary the handwriting, the same orthographical mistakes were reproduced with the most profound tranquillity, and Genlot, the literary man, was no more exempt from them than the Spanish captain. To strive to divine this mystery was time thrown away, and if he had not picked it up it would have looked like a mystification; Marius was too sad to take kindly even a jest of accident, and lend himself to a game which the street pavement appeared desirous to play with him. He felt as if he were playing at blind-man's buff among these four letters and they were mocking him. Nothing, besides, indicated that these letters belonged to the girls whom Marius had met in the boulevard. After all they were papers evidently of no value. Marius returned them to the envelope, threw the lot into a corner, and went to bed.

At about seven in the morning he had got up and breakfasted, and was trying to set to work, when there came a gentle tap at the door. As he possessed nothing he never locked his door, except very rarely, when he had a pressing job to finish. As a rule, even when out, he left the key in



the lock. There was a second knock, quite as gentle as the first.

"Come in," said Marius.

The door opened.

"What is the matter, Ma'am Bougon?" Marius continued, without taking his eyes off the books and MSS. on his table.

A voice, which was not Ma'am Bougon's, replied: "I beg your pardon, sir."

It was a hollow, cracked, choking voice, the voice of an old man, rendered hoarse by dram-drinking and exposure to the cold.

A girl who was quite young was standing in the half-open door. The skylight, through which light entered, was exactly opposite the door, and threw upon this form a sallow gleam. She was a wretched, exhausted, fleshless creature, and had only a chemise and a petticoat upon her shivering and frozen nudity. For waistbelt she had a piece of string, for head-dress another,—pointed shoulders emerged from her chemise; she was of an earthy pallor, her hands were red, her mouth degraded, and she had lost teeth; her eye was sunken and hollow, and she had the outline of an abortive girl and the look of a corrupted old woman, or fifty years blended with fifteen. She was one of those beings who are at once weak and horrible, and who make those shudder whom they do not cause to weep.

Marius had risen, and was gazing with a species of stupor at this being, who almost resembled the shadows that traverse dreams. What was most crushing of all was, that this girl had not come into the world to be ugly, and in her childhood she must even have been pretty. The grace of youth was still struggling with the hideous and premature senility of debauchery and poverty. A remnant of beauty was expiring on this countenance of sixteen, like the pallid sun which dies out under the frightful clouds on the dawn of a winter's day. This face was not absolutely strange to Marius, and he fancied that he had already seen it somewhere.

"What do you want, miss?" he asked.

The girl replied, with her drunken galley-slave's voice:

"It is a letter for you, Monsieur Marius."

She addressed him by name, and hence he could not doubt but that she had to do with him; but who was this girl, and how did she know his name? Without waiting for

any authority, she walked in. She walked in boldly, looking at the whole room and the unmade bed with a sort of assurance that contracted the heart. Her feet were bare, and large holes in her petticoat displayed her long legs and thin knees. She was shivering, and held in her hand a letter, which she offered to Marius. On opening the letter, he noticed that the large, clumsy wafer was still damp, which proved that the missive had not come a long distance, and he read :

“ My amicable neighbour and young sir !

“ I have heard of your kindness to me, and that you paid my half-year's rent six months ago. I bless you for it, young sir. My eldest daughter will tell you that we have been without a morsel of bread for two days,—four persons, and my wife ill. If I am not deceived in my opinion, I dare to hope that your generous heart will be affected by this statement, and will arouse in you a desire to be propitious to me, by daiming to lavish on me a trifling charity.

“ I am, with the distinguished consideration which is due to the benefactors of humanity, JONDRETTE.

“ P.S.—My daughter will wait for your orders, my dear Monsieur Marius.”

This letter, in the midst of the obscure adventure which had been troubling Marius since the previous evening, was like a candle in a cellar ; all was suddenly lit up. This letter came from where the other letters came. It was the same handwriting, the same style, the same orthography, the same paper, and the same tobacco smell. There were five letters, five stories, five names, five signatures, and only one writer. The Spanish captain Don Alvarez, the unhappy mother Balizard, the dramatic author Genflot, and the old comedian Fabantou, were all four Jondrette, if, indeed, Jondrette's name were really Jondrette.

During the lengthy period that Marius had lived in the tenement, he had had, as we stated, but very few opportunities to see, or even catch a glance of, his very low neighbours. His mind was elsewhere, and where the mind is, there is the eye. He must have passed the Jondrettes more than once in the passage and on the stairs, but they were to him merely shadows. He had paid



so little attention to them, that on the previous evening he had run against the Jondrette girls on the boulevard without recognising them; for it was evidently they; and it was with great difficulty that this girl, who had just entered the room, aroused in him, through disgust and pity, a vague fancy that he had met her somewhere before.

Now he saw everything clearly. He understood that his neighbour Jondrette in his distress had hit upon the trade of working upon the charity of benevolent persons; that he procured addresses and wrote under supposititious names, to people whom he supposed to be rich and charitable, letters which his children delivered at their risk and peril, for this father had attained such a stage that he hazarded his daughters; he was gambling with destiny and staked them. Marius comprehended that, in all probability, judging from their flight of the previous evening, their panting, their terror, and the slang words he overheard, these unfortunates carried on some other dark trades, and the result of all this was, in the heart of human society such as it is constituted, two wretched beings, who were neither children, nor girls, nor women, but a species of impure and innocent monsters, which were the produce of wretchedness.

While Marius was bending on the young girl an astonished and painful glance, she was walking about the garret with the boldness of a spectre, and without troubling herself in the slightest about her state of nudity. At some moments her unfastened and torn chemise fell almost to her waist. She moved the chairs about, disturbed the toilette articles on the chest of drawers, felt Marius' clothes, and rummaged in every corner.

"Why," she said, "you have a looking-glass!"

And she hummed, as if she had been alone, bits of vaudeville songs and wild choruses, which her guttural and hoarse voice rendered mournful. But beneath this boldness there was something constrained, alarmed, and humiliated, for effrontery is a disgrace. Nothing could well be more sad than to see her fluttering about the room with the movement of a broken-winged bird startled by a dog. It was palpable that with other conditions of education and destiny, the gay and free demeanour of this girl might have been something gentle and charming. Among animals, the creature born to be a dove is never

changed into an osprey; that is only possible with men. Marius was thinking, and left her alone, and she walked up to the table.

"Ah!" she said, "books."

A gleam darted from her glassy eye: she continued, and her accent expressed the attitude of being able to boast of something to which no human creature is insensible:

"I know how to read."

She quickly seized the book lying on the table, and read rather fluently:

"General Bauduin received orders to carry with the five battalions of his brigade the Château of Hougomont, which is in the centre of the plain of Waterloo——"

She broke off.

"Ah, Waterloo, I know all about that. It was a battle in which my father was engaged, for he served in the army. We are thorough Bonapartists, we are. Waterloo was fought against the English."

She laid down the book, took up a pen, and exclaimed, "And I can write, too."

She dipped the pen in the ink, and turned to Marius, saying:

"Would you like a proof? stay, I will write a line to show you."

And ere he had time to answer she wrote on a sheet of white paper in the middle of the table, "Here are the slops." Then, throwing down the pen, she added:

"There are no errors in spelling, as you can see, for my sister and I were well educated. We have not always been what we are now. We were not made——"

Here she stopped, fixed her glassy eye on Marius, and burst into a laugh, as she said, with an intonation which contained every possible agony, blended with every possible cynicism:

"Bosh!"

"Do you ever go to the play, Monsieur Marius?" she continued. "I do so. I have a brother who is a friend of the actors, and who gives me tickets every now and then. I don't care for the gallery much, though, for you are so squeezed up; at times too there are noisy people there, and others who smell bad."

Then she stared at Marius, gave him a strange look, and said to him:



"Do you know, M. Marius, that you are a very good-looking fellow!"

And at the same moment the same thought occurred to both, which made her smile and him blush. She walked up to him, and laid a hand upon his shoulder: "You don't pay any attention to me, but I know you, M. Marius. I meet you here on the staircase, and then I see you go in to a swell of the name of M. Mabœuf, who lives over at Austerlitz, when I am out that way. Your curly hair becomes you very well."

Her voice tried to be very soft, and only succeeded in being very low; a part of her words was lost in the passage from the larynx to the lips, as on a pianoforte some keys of which are broken. Marius had gently recoiled.

"I have a packet," he said, with his cold gravity, "which, I believe, belongs to you. Allow me to deliver it to you."

And he handed her the envelope which contained the four letters; she clapped her hands and said:

"We looked for it everywhere."

Then she quickly seized the parcel, and undid the envelope, while saying:

"Lord of Lords! how my sister and I *did* look for it! And so you found it? on the boulevard, did you not? it must have been there. You see, it was dropped while we were running, and it was my brat of a sister who made the stupid blunder. When we got home we could not find it, and, as we did not wish to be beaten, which is unnecessary, which is entirely unnecessary, which is absolutely unnecessary, we said at home that we had delivered the letters, and that the answer was Nix! and here are the poor letters! Well, and how did you know that they were mine? Oh, yes, by the writing. So, then, it was you that we ran against last night? We could not see anything, and I said to my sister, 'Is it a gentleman?' and she answered, 'Yes, I think it is a gentleman.'"

While saying this she had unfolded the petition addressed to the "benevolent gentleman of the church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas."

"Hilloh!" she said, "this is the one for the old swell who goes to Mass. Why, 'tis just the hour, and I will carry it to him. He will perhaps give us something for breakfast."

Then she burst into a laugh, and added :

"Do you know what it will be if we breakfast to-day? We shall have our breakfast of the day before yesterday, our dinner of the day before yesterday, our breakfast of yesterday, our dinner of yesterday, all at once this morning. Well, hang it all! if you are not satisfied, rot, dogs!"

And she gazed at him with haggard eyes.

After feeling in the depths of all his pockets, Marius succeeded in getting together five francs and sixteen sous; it was at this moment all that he possessed in the world. "Here is my to-day's dinner," he thought, "and to-morrow will take care of itself." He kept the sixteen sous, and gave the girl the five-franc piece, which she eagerly clutched.

She pulled her chemise up over her shoulders, gave Marius a deep curtsy, and a familiar wave of the hand, and walked towards the door, saying :

"Good-day, sir, but no matter, I'll go and find my old swell."

As she passed she noticed on the bureau an old crust of dry bread, mouldering in the dust; she caught it up, and bit into it savagely, grumbling :

"It is good, it is hard; it breaks my teeth!"

Then she went out.

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

FOR five years Marius had lived in poverty, want, and even distress, but he now saw that he had never known what real misery was. Now he had seen it—it was the phantom which had just passed before him. For, in truth, he who has only seen man's misery has seen nothing, he must see woman's misery; while he who has seen woman's misery has seen nothing, for he must see the misery of the child. When man has reached the last extremity he has also reached the limit of his resources; and, then, woe to the defenceless beings that surround him! Work, wages, bread, fire, courage, and food, will all fail him at once; the light of day seems extinguished outside, the moral light is extinguished within him. In these shadows man comes



across the weakness of the wife and the child, and violently hends them to ignominy.

This girl was to Marius a sort of emissary from the darkness, and she revealed to him a hideous side of night. Marius almost reproached himself for the preoccupations of reverie and passion which, up to this day, had prevented him from taking a glance at his neighbours. They doubtless seemed very depraved, very corrupt, very vile, and indeed very odious; but persons who fall without being degraded are rare. Besides, there is a stage where the unfortunate and the infamous are mingled and confounded in one word, a fatal word, *Les Misérables*, and with whom lies the fault? And then again, should not the charity be the greater the deeper the fall is?

While reading himself this lecture, for there were occasions on which Marius was his own pedagogue, and reproached himself more than he deserved, he looked at the wall which separated him from the Jondrettes, as if his pitying glance could pass through the partition, and warn the unhappy beings. The wall was a thin coating of plaster, supported by laths and beams, and which, as we have stated, allowed the murmurs of words and voices to be distinctly heard. A man must be a dreamer like Marius not to have noticed the fact before. No paper was hung on either side of the wall, and its clumsy construction was plainly visible. Almost unconsciously Marius examined this partition; for at times reverie examines, scrutinises, and observes much as thought does. All at once he rose, for he had just noticed near the ceiling a triangular hole produced by the gap between three laths. The plaster which once covered this hole had fallen off, and by getting on his bureau he could see through this aperture into the room of the Jondrettes. Commiseration has, and should have, its curiosity, and it is permissible to regard misfortune traitorously when we wish to relieve it. "Let me see," thought Marius, "what these people are like, and what state they are in." He got upon the bureau, put his eye to the aperture, and looked.

Cities, like forests, have their dens, in which all that is most vile and terrible hides itself. The only difference is, that what hides itself thus in cities is ferocious, unclean, and little, that is to say, ugly; what conceals itself in the forests is ferocious, savage, and grand, that is to say, beautiful. Den for den, those of the beasts are preferable to

those of men; and caverns are better than hiding-places. Marius was poor, and his room was indigent; but, in the same way as his poverty was noble, his room was clean. The garret into which he was now looking was abject, dirty, fetid, infectious, dark, and sordid. The furniture only consisted of a straw-bottomed chair, a rickety table, a few old earthenware articles, and in the corners two indescribable beds. The only light came through a skylight with four panes of glass festooned with spider-webs. Through this came just sufficient light for the face of a man to see in the face of a spectre. The walls had a leprous look, and were covered with gashes and scars, like a face disfigured by some horrible disease, and a putrid damp oozed from them. Obscene designs, clumsily drawn in charcoal, could be distinguished on them.

The room which Marius occupied had a broken brick flooring, but in this one the people walked on the old plaster, which had grown black under the feet. Upon this uneven flooring, where the dust was, so to speak, encrusted, and which had but one virginity, that of the broom, were capriciously grouped constellations of old shoes, boots, and frightful rags; this room, however, had a chimney, and for this reason was let at forty francs a year. There was something of everything in this fireplace,—a chafing-dish, a pot, some broken planks, rags hanging from nails, a bird-cage, ashes, and even a little fire, for two logs were smoking there sadly. A thing which augmented the horror of this garret was the fact of its being large; it had angles, nooks, black holes under the roof, bays, and promontories. Hence came frightful, inscrutable corners, in which it seemed as if spiders large as one's fist, wood-lice as large as one's foot, and possibly some human monsters, must lurk.

One of the beds was near the door, the other near the window, but the ends of both ran down to the mantelpiece, and faced Marius. In a corner near the hole through which Marius was peeping, a coloured engraving in a black frame, under which was written in large letters, **THE DREAM**, leant against the wall. It represented a sleeping woman and a sleeping child, the child lying on the woman's knees, an eagle in the clouds with a crown in its beak, and the woman removing the crown from the child's head, without awaking it, however; in the background Napoleon, surrounded by a halo, was



leaning against a dark blue column, with a yellow capital, that bore the following inscription :—

MARINGO  
AUSTERLITS  
IENA  
WAGRAMME  
ELOT

Below this frame a sort of wooden panel, longer than it was wide, was standing on the ground and leaning against the wall. It looked like a picture turned from the spectator, or some signboard detached from a wall and forgotten while waiting to be hung again. At the table, on which Marius noticed pen, ink, and paper, a man was seated of about sixty years of age, short, thin, livid, haggard, with a sharp, cruel, and listless look—a hideous scamp. If Lavater had examined this face he would have found in it the vulture blended with the attorney's clerk; the bird of prey and the man of trickery rendering each other more ugly and more perfect—the man of trickery rendering the bird of prey ignoble, and the bird of prey rendering the man of trickery horrible. This man had a long gray beard, and wore a woman's chemise, which allowed his hairy chest, and naked arms, bristling with gray hairs, to be seen. Under this chemise might be noticed muddy trousers, and boots out of which his toes stuck. He had a pipe in his mouth, and was smoking; there was no bread in the garret, but there was still tobacco. He was writing, probably some letter like those which Marius had read. On one corner of the table could be seen an old broken-backed volume, the form of which, the old *12mo* of circulating libraries, indicated that it was a romance; on the cover figured the following title, printed in large capitals,—GOD, THE KING, HONOUR, AND THE LADIES: BY DUCRAY DUMINIL, 1814. While writing, the man was talking aloud, and Marius heard his words :

“Only to think that there is no equality, even when a man is dead! Just look at Père La Chaise! The great ones, those who are rich, are up above, in the Acacia Avenue which is paved, and reach it in a coach. The little folk, the poor people, the wretched—they are put down at the bottom where there is mud up to the knees, in holes, and in the damp, and they are placed there that they may rot all the

sooner. You can't go to see them without sinking into the ground."

Here he stopped, smote the table with his fist, and added, while he gnashed his teeth:

"Oh! I could eat the world!"

A big woman, who might have been forty or one hundred, was crouched up near the chimney-piece on her naked feet. She too was only dressed in a chemise, a cotton petticoat, pieced with patches of old cloth, and an apron of coarse canvas concealing one half of the petticoat. Though this woman was sitting all of a heap, you could see that she was very tall, and a species of giantess by her husband's side. She had frightful hair, of a reddish auburn, beginning to turn gray, which she thrust back every now and then with her enormous strong hands, which had flat nails. By her side, on the ground, was lying an open volume, of the same form as the other, probably part of the same romance. On one of the beds Marius caught a glimpse of a slender little wan girl, sitting up almost naked, and with hanging feet, who did not seem to hear, see, or live; she was, doubtless, the younger sister of the one who had come to his room. She appeared to be eleven or twelve years of age, but on examining her attentively it could be seen that she was at least fourteen. It was the girl who said on the boulevard the previous night, "I bolted." She was of that backward class who keep down for a long time and then shoot up quickly and suddenly. It is indigence which produces these human plants, and these creatures have neither infancy nor adolescence. At fifteen they seem twelve, and at sixteen they appear twenty; to-day it is a little girl, to-morrow a woman; we might almost say that they stride through life in order to reach the end more rapidly. At this moment, however, she had the look of a child.

In this lodging there was not the slightest sign of work; not a loom, a spinning-wheel, or a single tool, but in one corner were some iron implements of dubious appearance. It was that dull indolence which follows despair and precedes death. Marius gazed for some time at this mournful interior, which was more terrifying than the interior of a tomb, for here were felt the movements of a human soul, and the palpitation of life.

Marius, with a heavy heart, was just going to descend from the species of observatory which he had improvised, when a noise attracted his attention, and made him remain



at his post. The door of the garret was suddenly opened, and the elder daughter appeared on the threshold. She had on her feet clumsy men's shoes covered with mud, which had even plashed her red ankles, and she was covered with an old ragged cloak, which Marius had not noticed an hour previously, and which she had probably left at his door, in order to inspire greater sympathy, and put on again when she went out. She came in, shut the door after her, stopped to take breath, for she was panting, and then cried, with an expression of triumph and joy, "He is coming!"

The father turned his eyes, the mother turned her head, and the little girl did not move.

"Who? the philanthropist?" the father asked.

"Yes."

"Of the church of St. Jacques?"

"Yes. He is following me."

"Are you sure?"

"He is coming in a hackney coach, I tell you."

"How are you sure? if he is coming in a coach, how is it that you got here before him? did you give him the address, and are you certain you told him the last door on the right in the passage? I only hope he will not make a mistake. Did you find him at church? did he read my letter, and what did he say to you?"

"Ta, ta, ta," said the girl, "how you gallop, my good man. I went into the church, he was at his usual place, I made a curtsey and handed him the letter, he read it, and said to me, 'Where do you live, my child?' I said, 'I will show you the way, sir;' he said, 'No, give me your address, for my daughter has some purchases to make. I will take a hackney coach, and be at your abode as soon as you.' I gave him the address, and when I mentioned the house he seemed surprised, and hesitated for a moment, but then said, 'No matter, I will go.' When mass was over I saw him leave the church and get into a coach with his daughter. And I carefully told him the last door on the right at the end of the passage."

"And what tells you that he will come?"

"I have just seen the coach turn into the Rue du Petit Banquier, and that is why I ran."

"How do you know it is the same coach?"

"Because I noticed the number, of course."

"What was it?"

"Four hundred and forty."

"Good, you are a clever girl. And so you are sure that he will come?"

"He is at my heels," she replied.

The man drew himself up, and there was a species of illumination on his face.

"Wife," he cried, "you hear! Here is the philanthropist; put out the fire."

The stupefied mother did not stir, but the father, with the agility of a mountebank, seized the cracked pot, which stood on the chimney-piece, and threw water on the logs. Then he said to his elder daughter:

"Pull the straw out of the chair."

As his daughter did not understand him, he seized the chair and kicked the seat out; his leg passed through it, and while drawing it out, he asked the girl:

"Is it cold?"

"Very cold, it is snowing."

The father turned to the younger girl, who was on the bed, near the window, and shouted in a thundering voice:

"Come off the bed directly, idler; you never will do anything; break a pane of glass!"

The little girl jumped off the bed, shivering

"Break a pane!" he continued

The girl was quite stunned, and did not move.

"Do you hear me?" the father repeated; "I tell you to break a pane."

The child, with a sort of terrified obedience, stood on tip-toe, and broke a pane with her fist; the glass fell with a great clash.

"All right!" said the father.

He was serious and active, and his eye rapidly surveyed every corner of the garret, he was like a general who makes his final preparations at the moment when an action is about to begin. The mother, who had not yet said a word, rose and asked in a slow, dull voice, the words seeming to issue as if frozen:

"Darling, what do you intend to do?"

"Go to bed," the man replied

The tone admitted of no deliberation; the mother obeyed, and threw herself heavily on one of the beds. A sobbing was now audible in a corner.

"What is that?" the father cried.

The younger girl, without leaving the gloom in which she was crouching, showed her bleeding hand. In breaking



the glass she had cut herself; she had crawled close to her mother's bed, and was now crying silently. It was the mother's turn to draw herself up and cry.

"You see what nonsensical acts you commit! she has cut herself in breaking the window."

"All the better," said the man, "I expected it."

"How all the better?" the woman continued.

"Silence!" the father replied, "I suppress the liberty of the press."

Then, tearing the chemise which he wore, he made a bandage, with which he quickly wrapped up the girl's bleeding hand; this done, his eye settled on the torn shirt with satisfaction.

"And the shirt too!" he said; "all this looks well."

An icy blast blew through the pane and entered the room. The external fog penetrated it, and dilated like a white wadding pulled open by invisible fingers. The snow could be seen falling through the broken pane, and the cold promised by the Candlemas sun had really arrived. The father took a look around him, as if to make sure that he had forgotten nothing, then he fetched an old spade and strewed the ashes over the wet logs so as to conceal them entirely. Then getting up and leaning against the chimney-piece, he said:

"Now we can receive the philanthropist."

The elder girl walked up to her father, and laid her hand in his.

"Feel how cold I am!" she said.

"Pshaw!" the father answered, "I am much colder than that."

The mother cried impetuously:

"You always have everything better than the others, the evil even."

"To kennel!" the man said.

The mother, looked at by him in a certain way, held her tongue, and there was a momentary silence in the den. The elder girl was carelessly removing the mud from the edge of her cloak, and her younger sister continued to sob. The mother had taken her head between her hands, and covered it with kisses, while whispering:

"Pray do not go on so, my treasure; it will be nothing, so don't cry, or you will vex your father."

"No," the father cried, "on the contrary, sob away, for that does good."

Then he turned to the elder girl :

"Why, he is not coming ! suppose he were not to come ! I should have broken my pane, put out my fire, unseated my chair, and torn my shirt all for nothing."

"And hurt the little one," the mother murmured.

"Do you know," the father continued, "that it is infernally cold in this devil's own garret ? Suppose the man did not come ! but no, he is keeping us waiting, and says to himself, 'Well, they will wait my pleasure, they are sent into the world for that !' Oh ! how I hate the rich, and with what joy, jubilation, enthusiasm, and satisfaction, would I strangle them all ! I will bet that that old brute——"

At this moment there was a gentle tap at the door ; the man rushed forward and opened it, while exclaiming with deep bows and smiles of adoration :

"Come in, sir, deign to enter, my respected benefactor, as well as your charming daughter."

A man of middle age and a young lady stood in the doorway ; Marius had not left his post, and what he felt at this moment is beyond the human tongue.

It was She ; and any one who has loved knows the radiant meaning conveyed in the three letters that form the word She. It was certainly she, though Marius could hardly distinguish her through the luminous vapour which had suddenly spread over his eyes. It was the gentle creature he had lost, the star which had gleamed on him for six months, it was the forehead, the mouth, the lovely mouth which had produced night by departing. The eclipse was over, and she now reappeared—reappeared in this darkness, in this attic, in this filthy den, in this horror. Marius trembled. What ! it was she ! the palpitation of his heart affected his sight, and he felt ready to burst into tears. What ! he saw her again after seeking her so long ! it seemed to him as if he had lost his soul and had just found it again. She was still the same, though, perhaps, a little paler ; her delicate face was framed in a violet velvet bonnet, her waist was hidden by a black satin pelisse, and a glimpse of her little foot in a silk boot could be caught under her long dress. She was accompanied by M. Leblanc, and she walked into the room and placed a rather large parcel on the table. The elder girl had withdrawn behind the door and looked with a jealous eye at the velvet bonnet, the satin pelisse, and the charming, happy face.



The garret was so dark that persons who came into it felt much as if they were going into a cellar. The two newcomers, therefore, advanced with some degree of hesitation, scarce distinguishing the vague forms around them, while they were perfectly seen and examined by the eyes of the denizens in the attic, who were accustomed to this gloom. M. Leblanc walked up to Father Jondrette, with his sad and gentle smile, and said :

"You will find in this parcel, sir, new apparel, woollen stockings, and blankets."

"Our angelic benefactor overwhelms us," Jondrette said, bowing to the ground; then, bending down to the ear of his elder daughter, he added in a hurried whisper, while the two visitors were examining this lamentable interior :

"Did I not say so? clothes but no money. They are all alike. By the way, how was the letter to the old ass signed?"

"Fabantou."

"The actor; all right."

It was lucky that Jondrette asked this, for at the same moment M. Leblanc turned to him, and said, with the air of a person who is trying to remember the name :

"I see that you are much to be pitied, Monsieur——"

"Fabantou," Jondrette quickly added.

"Monsieur Fabantou, yes, that is it, I remember."

"An actor, sir, who has been successful in his time."

Here Jondrette evidently believed the moment arrived to trap his philanthropist, and he shouted in a voice which had some of the bombast of the country showman, and the humility of the professional beggar,—*"A pupil of Talma, sir! I am a pupil of Talma! Fortune smiled upon me formerly, but now, alas! the turn of misfortune has arrived. You see, my benefactor, we have no bread, no fire. My poor babies have no fire. My sole chair without a seat! a pane of glass broken! in such weather as this! my wife in bed, ill!"*

"Poor woman!" said M. Leblanc.

"My child hurt," Jondrette added.

The child, distracted by the arrival of the strangers, was staring at the "young lady," and ceased sobbing.

"Cry, I tell you—roar!" Jondrette whispered to her. At the same time he squeezed her bad hand. All this was done with the talent of a conjurer. The little one uttered piercing

cries, and the adorable girl whom Marius called in his heart, "his Ursule," eagerly went up to her.

"Poor dear child!" she said.

"You see, respected young lady," Jondrette continued, "her hand is bleeding. It is the result of an accident which happened to her while working at a factory to earn six sous a day. It is possible that her arm will have to be cut off."

"Really?" the old gentleman said in alarm.

The little girl, taking this remark seriously, began sobbing again her loudest.

"Alas, yes, my benefactor!" the father answered.

For some minutes past Jondrette had been looking at the "philanthropist" in a peculiar way, and while speaking seemed to be scrutinising him attentively, as if trying to recall his recollections. All at once, profiting by a moment during which the new-comers were questioning the little girl about her injured hand, he passed close to his wife, who was lying in her bed with a surprised and stupid air, and said to her in a hurried whisper:

"Look at that man!"

Then he turned to M. Leblanc, and continued his lamentations.

"Look, sir! my sole clothing consists of a chemise of my wife's, all torn, in the heart of winter. I cannot go out for want of a coat, and if I had the smallest bit of a coat I would go and call on Mademoiselle Mats, who knows me, and is much attached to me; does she still live in the Rue de la Tour des Dames? Do you know, sir, that we played together in the provinces, and that I shared her laurels? Célimène would come to my help, sir, and Elmire give alms to Belisarius. But no, nothing! and not a halfpenny piece in the house! my wife ill, not a sou! my daughter dangerously injured, not a sou! my wife suffers from shortness of breath—it comes from her age, and then the nervous system is mixed up in it. She requires assistance, and so does my daughter. But the physician and the apothecary, how are they to be paid, if I have not a farthing? I would kneel down before a decime, sir. You see to what the arts are reduced! And do you know, my charming young lady, and you, my generous protector, who exhale virtue and goodness, and who perfume the church where my poor child sees you daily when she goes to say her prayers! for I am bringing up my daughters in religion, sir, and did not wish them



to turn to the stage. I do not jest, sir ; I read them lectures of honour, morality, and virtue. Just ask them ! They must go straight ; for they have a father. They are not wretched girls who begin by having no family, and finish by marrying the public. Such a girl is Miss Nobody, and becomes Madame All the World. There must be nothing of that sort in the Fabantou family ! I intend to educate them virtuously, and they must be respectable, and honest, and believe in God's holy name. Well, sir, worthy sir, do you know what will happen to-morrow ? To-morrow is the fatal 4th of February, the last respite my landlord has granted me, and if I do not pay my rent by to-night, my eldest daughter, myself, my wife with her fever, my child with her wound, will be all four of us turned out of here into the street, shelterless in the rain and snow. That is the state of the case, sir ! I owe four quarters, a year's rent, that is to say, sixty francs."

Jondrette lied, for four quarters would only have been forty francs, and he could not owe four, as it was not six months since Marius had paid two for him. M. Leblanc took a five-franc piece from his pocket and threw it on the table. Jondrette had time to growl in his grown-up daughter's ear :

"The scamp ! what does he expect me to do with his five francs ? They will not pay for the chair and pane of glass. There's the result of making an outlay."

In the meanwhile, M. Leblanc had taken off a heavy brown coat, which he wore over his blue one, and thrown it on the back of a chair.

"Monsieur Fabantou," he said, "I have only these five francs about me, but I will take my daughter home and return to-night. Is it not to-night that you have to pay ?"

Jondrette's face was lit up with a strange expression, and he hurriedly answered :

"Yes, respected sir, I must be with my landlord by eight o'clock."

"I will be here by six, and bring you the sixty francs."

"My benefactor !" Jondrette exclaimed wildly ; and he added in a whisper :

"Look at him carefully, wife."

M. Leblanc had given his arm to the lovely young lady, and was turning to the door.

"Till this evening, my friends," he said.

"At six o'clock ?" Jondrette asked.

"At six o'clock precisely."

At this moment the overcoat left on the back of the chair caught the eye of the elder girl.

"Sir," she said, "you are forgetting your greatcoat."

Jondrette gave his daughter a crushing glance, accompanied by a formidable shrug of the shoulders, but M. Leblanc turned and replied smilingly :

"I do not forget it, I leave it."

"Oh, my protector," said Jondrette, "my august benefactor, I am melting into tears ! permit me to conduct you to your vehicle."

"If you go out," M. Leblanc remarked, "put on that overcoat, for it is really very cold."

Jondrette did not let this be said twice, but eagerly put on the brown coat. And they went out, all three, Jondrette preceding the two strangers.

Marius had lost nothing of all this scene, and yet in reality he had seen nothing of it. His eyes had remained fixed on the young girl ; his heart had, so to speak, seized and entirely enfolded her from her first step into the garret. During the whole time she had been there he had lived that life of ecstasy which suspends material perceptions, and concentrates the whole mind upon one point. He contemplated not the girl, but the radiance which was dressed in a satin pelisse and a velvet bonnet. Had the planet Sirius entered the room he would not have been more dazzled. While she was opening the parcel, and unfolding the clothes and blankets, questioning the sick mother kindly, and the little wounded girl tenderly, he watched her every movement, and tried to hear her words. Though he knew her eyes, her forehead, her beauty, her waist, and her walk, he did not know the sound of her voice. He fancied that he had caught a few words once at the Luxembourg, but he was not absolutely sure. He would have given ten years of his life to hear her, and to carry off in his soul a little of this music, but all was lost in the lamentable braying of Jondrette's trumpet. This mingled a real anger with Marius' ravishment, and he devoured her with his eyes, for he could not imagine that it was really this divine creature whom he perceived among these unclean beings in this monstrous den ; he fancied that he saw a humming-bird among frogs.

When she left the room he had but one thought,—to follow her, to attach himself to her trail, not to leave her till



he knew where she lived, or at least not to lose her again after having so miraculously found her. He leapt off the bureau, and seized his hat, but just as he laid his hand on the latch and was going out a reflection arrested him; the passage was long, the staircase steep. Jondrette chattering, and M. Leblanc had doubtless not yet got into his coach again. If, turning in the passage, or on the stairs, he were to perceive him, Marius, in this house, he would assuredly be alarmed, and find means to escape him again, and so all would be over for the second time. What was to be done? wait awhile? but during this delay the vehicle might start off. Marius was perplexed, but at length risked it, and left the room. There was no one in the passage, and he ran to the stairs, and as there was no one upon them, he hurried down and reached the boulevard just in time to see a hackney-coach turning the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier, on its road to Paris.

Marius rushed in that direction, and, on reaching the corner of the boulevard, saw the hackney-coach again rapidly rolling along the Rue Moutfard; it was already some distance off, and he had no means of catching it up. Running after it was an impossibility; and, besides, a man running at full speed after the vehicle would be seen from it, and the father would recognise him. At this moment, by an extraordinary and marvellous accident, Marius perceived a cab passing along the boulevard, empty. There was only one thing to be done, get into this cab and follow the hackney-coach; that was sure, efficacious, and without danger. Marius made the driver a sign to stop, and shouted to him, "By the hour!" Marius had no cravat on, he wore his old working coat, from which buttons were missing, and one of the platts of his shirt was torn. The driver stopped, winked, and held out to Marius his left hand, as he gently rubbed his forefinger with his thumb.

"What do you mean?" Marius asked.

"Payment in advance," said the coachman.

Marius remembered that he had only sixteen sous in his pocket.

"How much is it?"

"Forty sous."

"I will pay on returning."

The driver, in reply, whistled the air of La Pâisse, and lashed his horse. Marius watched the cab go off with a haggard look; for the want of twenty-four sous, he lost his

joy, his happiness, his love ! he fell back into night ! he had seen, and was becoming blind again. He thought bitterly, and, we must add, with deep regret, of the five francs which he had given that very morning to the wretched girl. If he had still had them, he would have been saved, would have emerged from limbo and darkness, and have been drawn from isolation, spleen, and hereavement ; he would have reattached the black thread of his destiny to the beauteous golden thread which had just floated before his eyes, only to be broken again ! He returned to his garret in despair. He might have said to himself that M. Leblanc had promised to return that evening, and that then he must contrive to follow him better ; but in his contemplation he had scarce heard him.

Just as he was going up the stairs he noticed on the other side of the wall, and against the deserted wall of the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins, Jondrette, wrapped up in the "philanthropist's" overcoat, and conversing with one of those ill-looking men who are usually called prowlers at the barrière ; men with equivocal faces and suspicious soliloquies, who look as if they entertain evil thoughts, and most usually sleep by day, which leads to the supposition that they work at night. These two men, standing to talk in the snow, which was falling heavily, formed a group which a policeman would certainly have observed, but which Marius scarce noticed. Still, though his preoccupation was so painful, he could not help saying to himself that the man to whom Jondrette was talking was like a certain Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille, whom Courfeyrac had once pointed out to him, and who was regarded in the quarter as a very dangerous night-bird.

## CHAPTER LXXVII.

MARIUS mounted the stairs slowly, and at the moment when he was going to enter his cell he perceived behind him, in the passage, the elder of Jondrette's girls following him. This girl was odious in his sight, for it was she who had his five francs, but it was too late to ask them back from her, for both the hackney-coach and the cab were now far away. Besides, she would not return them to him. As for questioning her about the abode of the persons who had been here just now, that was useless, and it was plain that she did not



know, for the letter signed Fabantou was addressed to the "benevolent gentleman of the church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas." Marius went into his room and threw the door to after him, but it did not close ; he turned and saw a hand in the aperture.

"Who's that ?" he asked.

It was the girl.

"Oh ! it's you !" Marius continued almost harshly, "always you ! What do you want of me ?"

She seemed thoughtful, and made no answer, and she no longer had her boldness of the morning ; she did not come in, but stood in the dark passage, where Marius perceived her through the half-open door.

"Well, answer," said Marius, "what do you want of me ?"

She raised her dull eye, in which a sort of lustre seemed to be vaguely illumined, and said :

"Monsieur Marius, you look sad ; what is the matter with you ?"

"Nothing."

"Yes, there is !"

"Leave me alone !"

Marius pushed the door again, but she still held it.

"Stay," she said, "you are wrong. Though you are not rich, you were kind this morning ; be so again now. You gave me food, and now tell me what is the matter with you. It is easy to see that you are in sorrow, and I do not wish you to be so. What can I do to prevent it, and can I be of any service to you ? Employ me ; I do not ask for your secrets, and you need not tell them to me, but I may be of use to you. Surely I can help you, as I help my father. When there are any letters to deliver, or any address to be found by following people, or asking from door to door, I am employed. Well, you can tell me what is the matter with you, and I will go and speak to persons. Now and then it is sufficient for some one to speak to persons in order to find out things, and all is arranged. Employ me."

An idea crossed Marius' mind, for no branch is despised when we feel ourselves falling. He walked up to the girl.

"Listen to me," he said ; "you brought an old gentleman and his daughter here."

"Yes."

"Do you know their address ?"

"No."

"Find it for me."

The girl's eye, which was dull, had become joyous, but now it became gloomy.

"Is that what you want?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Do you know them?"

"No."

"That is to say," she added quickly, "you don't know her, but you would like to know her."

This "them," which became "her," had something most significant and bitter about it.

"Well, can you do it?" Marius said.

"You shall have the 'lovely young lady's' address."

In these words there was again a meaning which annoyed Marius, so he went on:

"Well, no matter! the father and daughter's address, their address, I say."

She looked at him fixedly.

"What will you give me for it?"

"Whatever you like."

"Whatever I like? You shall have the address."

She hung her head, and then closed the door with a hurried gesture; Marius was alone again. He fell into a chair, with his head and elbows on his bed, sunk in thoughts which he could not grasp, and suffering from a dizziness. All that had happened since the morning, the apparition of the angel, her disappearance, and what this creature had just said to him, a gleam of hope floating in an immense despair—this is what confusedly filled his brain. All at once he was violently dragged out of his reverie, for he heard Jondrette's loud, hard voice uttering words full of the strangest interest for him.

"I tell you that I am sure, and that I recognised him."

Of whom was Jondrette talking, and whom had he recognised? M. Leblanc, the father of "his Ursule." What! did Jondrette know him? Was Marius going to obtain, in this sudden and unexpected fashion, all the information without which his life was obscure for himself? was he at last going to know who she was whom he loved, and who her father was? Was the thick cloud that covered them on the point of clearing off? would the veil be rent asunder? Oh, heavens! He bounded rather than ascended upon the bureau and resumed his place at the aperture in the partition: once more he saw the interior of Jondrette's



den. There was no change in the appearance of the family, save that the mother and daughters had put on stockings and flannel waistcoats taken out of the parcel, and two new blankets were thrown on the beds. The man had evidently just returned, for he was out of breath; his daughters were seated near the fireplace on the ground, the elder tying up the younger's hand. The mother was crouching on the bed near the fireplace, with an astonished face, while Jondrette was walking up and down the room with long strides. His eyes had an extraordinary look. The woman, who seemed frightened and struck with stupor before him, ventured to say:

"What, really, are you sure?"

"Sure! it is eight years ago, but I can recognise him! I recognised him at once. What! did it not strike you?"

"No."

"And yet I said to you, 'Pay attention!' Why, it is his figure, his face, very little older—for there are some people who never age, though I do not know how they manage it—and the sound of his voice. He is better dressed, that's all! Ah! you mysterious old villain, I hold you!"

He stopped and said to his daughters:

"Be off, you two!—It is funny that it did not strike you."

They rose to obey, and the mother stammered:

"With her bad hand?"

"The air will do it good," said Jondrette. "Off with you."

It was evident that this man was one of those who are not answered. The girls went out, but just as they passed the door the father clutched the elder by the arm, and said, with a peculiar accent:

"You will be here at five o'clock precisely, both of you, for I shall want you."

Marius redoubled his attention. When left alone with his wife, Jondrette began walking up and down the room again, and took two or three turns in silence. All at once he turned to his wife, folded his arms, and exclaimed:

"And shall I tell you something? the young lady——"

"Well, what?" the wife retorted

Marius could not doubt, they were really talking about her. He listened with ardent anxiety, and all his life was in his ears. But Jondrette had stooped down, and was whispering to his wife. Then he rose, and ended aloud:

"It is she."

"That one?" the wife asked.

"That one!" said the husband.

No expression could render all there was in the mother's *that one*; it was surprise, rage, hatred, and passion mingled and combined in a monstrous intonation. A few words, doubtless a name which her husband whispered in her ear, were sufficient to arouse this huge, crushed woman, and to make her more than repulsive and frightful.

"It is not possible," she exclaimed; "when I think that my daughters go about barefooted, and have not a gown to put on! What! a satin pelisse, a velvet bonnet, clothes worth more than two hundred francs, so that you might take her for a lady! no! you are mistaken! and, then, the other was hideous, while this one is not ugly, indeed, rather good-looking: oh, it cannot be!"

"And I tell you that it is. Shall I tell you something else?"

"What?" she asked.

He replied in a low, guttural voice, "That my fortune is made."

The wife looked at him in the way which means, "Can the man who is talking to me have suddenly gone mad?" He continued:

"Thunder! I have been a long time a paissioner of the parish of die-of-hunger-if-you-have-any-fire, and die of-cold-if-you-have-any-bread! I have had enough of that misery! I am not jesting, for I no longer consider this comical. I have had enough jokes, good God! and want no more farces, by the Eternal Father! I wish to eat when I am hungry, and drink when I am thirsty: to gorge, sleep, and do nothing. I want to have my turn now, and mean to be a bit of a millionaire before I rot!" He walked up and down the room and added, "Like the rest!"

"What do you mean?" his wife asked.

"Listen carefully. The Croesus is trapped, or as good as trapped. It is done, arranged, and I have seen the people. He will come at six this evening to bring the sixty francs, the vagabond! Did you notice how I plummed him about my landlord on February 4th? Why, it is not a quarter-day, the ass. Well, he will come at six o'clock, and at that hour the neighbour has gone to dinner, and Mother Bougon is washing up dishes in town, so there will be no one in the house. The neighbour never comes in before



eleven o'clock. The little ones will be on the watch, you will help us, and he will execute himself."

"And suppose he does not?" the wife asked.

Jondrette made a sinister gesture, and said, "We will do it for him."

And he burst into a laugh: it was the first time that Marius saw him laugh, and this laugh was cold and gentle, and produced a shudder. Jondrette opened a cupboard near the fireplace, and took out an old cap, which he put on his head after brushing it with his cuff.

"Now," he said, "I am going out, for I have some more people to see, good men. I shall be away as short a time as possible, for it is a famous affair; and do you keep house."

He went out, but had only gone a short distance when the door opened again, and his sharp, intelligent face reappeared in the aperture.

"I forgot," he said, "you will get a chafing-dish of charcoal ready."

And he threw into his wife's apron the five-franc piece which the "philanthropist" left him.

Jondrette closed the door again, and then Marius heard his steps as he went along the passage and down the stairs. It struck one at this moment from St. Medard's.

Dreamer as he was, Marius possessed, as we have said, a firm and energetic nature. His habits of solitary contemplation, by developing compassion and sympathy within him, had perhaps diminished the power of being irritated, but left intact the power of becoming indignant: he had the benevolence of a brahmin and the sternness of a judge, and while he pitied a toad he crushed a viper. At present he had a nest of vipers before him, and he said, "I must set my foot upon these villains." Not one of the enigmas which he hoped to see cleared up was solved; on the contrary, they had become rather denser, and he had learned no more about the pretty girl of the Luxembourg and the man whom he called M. Leblanc, save that Jondrette knew them. Through the dark words which had been uttered he only saw one thing distinctly, that a snare was preparing, an obscure but terrible snare; that they both ran an imminent danger, she probably, and the father certainly, and that he must save them, and foil the hideous combinations of the Jondrettes by destroying their spider's web.

He watched the woman for a moment; she had taken an old iron furnace from the corner, and was rummaging

among the tools. He got off the bureau as gently as he could, taking care not to make any noise. In his terror at what was preparing, and the horror with which the Jondrettes filled him, he felt a species of joy at the idea that it might perhaps be in his power to render such a service to her whom he loved. But what was he to do? should he warn the menaced persons? where was he to find them? for he did not know their address. They had reappeared to him momentarily, and then plunged again into the immense profundities of Paris. Should he wait for M. Leblanc at the gate at the moment when he arrived that evening and warn him of the snare? But Jondrette and his comrades would see him on the watch. The place was deserted, they would be stronger than he, they would find means to get him out of the way, and the man whom Marius wished to save would be lost. It had just struck one, and as the snare was laid for six o'clock, Marius had five hours before him. There was only one thing to be done; he put on his best coat, tied a handkerchief round his neck, took his hat, and went out, making no more noise than if he were walking barefoot on moss; besides, the woman was still rummaging among the old iron.

Once outside the house, he turned into the Rue du Petit Banquier. About the middle of the street he found himself near a very low wall, which it was possible to bestride in some places, and which surrounded unoccupied ground. He was walking slowly, deep in thought as he was, and the snow deadened his footsteps, when all at once he heard voices talking close to him. He turned his head, but the street was deserted; it was open day, and yet he distinctly heard the voices. He thought of looking over the wall, and really saw two men seated in the snow, and conversing in a low voice. They were strangers to him: one was a bearded man in a blouse, and the other a hairy man in rags. The bearded man wore a Greek cap, while the other was bareheaded, and had snow in his hair. By thrusting out his head over them Marius could hear the hairy man say to the other, with a nudge:

"With Patron Minette it cannot fail."

"Do you think so?" asked the bearded man, and the hairy man added:

"It will be five hundred balls for each, and the worst that can happen is five years, six years, or ten at the most."



The other replied with some hesitation, and shuddering under his Greek cap :

"That is a reality ; and people must not go to meet things of that sort."

"I tell you that the affair cannot fail," the hairy man continued. "Father What's-his-name's trap will be all ready."

Then they began talking of a melodrama which they had seen on the previous evening at the Gaîté.

Marius walked on ; but it seemed to him that the obscure remarks of these men, so strangely concealed behind this wall, and crouching in the snow, must have some connection with Jondrette's abominable scheme ; that must be the *affair*. He went toward the Faubourg St. Marceau, and asked at the first shop he came to where he could find a police commissary. He was told at No. 14 Rue de Pontoise, and he proceeded there. As he passed a baker's he bought a two-sous roll and ate it, as he foresaw that he should not dine. On the way he rendered justice to Providence. He thought that if he had not given the five francs in the morning to the girl he should have followed M. Leblanc's hackney-coach, and consequently known nothing. There would, in that case, have been no obstacle to Jondrette's ambuscade, and M. Leblanc would have been lost, and doubtless his daughter with him.

On reaching No. 14 Rue de Pontoise, he went up to the first floor and asked for the commissary.

"He is not in at present," said a clerk, "but there is an inspector to represent him. Will you speak to him ? is your business pressing ?"

"Yes," said Marius.

The clerk led him to the commissary's office. A very tall man was leaning here against the fender of a stove, and holding up with both hands the skirts of a mighty coat with three capes. He had a square face, thin and firm lips, thick grayish whiskers, and a look which seemed as if it was searching your pockets. Of this look you might have said, not that it pierced, but that it felt. This man did not appear much less ferocious or formidable than Jondrette ; for sometimes it is just as dangerous to meet the dog as the wolf.

"What do you want ?" he asked Marius, without adding sir.

"The police commissary."

"He is absent, but I represent him."

"It is a very secret affair."

"Then speak."

"And very urgent."

"In that case speak quick."

This man, who was calm and quick, was at once terrifying and reassuring. He inspired both fear and confidence. Marius told him of his adventure—that a person whom he only knew by sight was to be drawn that very evening into a trap—that he, Marius Pontmercy, barrister, residing in the next room to the den, had heard the whole plot through the partition—that the scoundrel's name who invented the snare was Jondrette—that he would have accomplices, probably prowlers at the *barrières*, among others one Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille—that Jondrette's daughters would be on the watch—that there were no means of warning the threatened man, as not even his name was known—and that, lastly, all this would come off at six in the evening, at the most deserted spot on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, in the house No. 50-52.

At this number the Inspector raised his head, and said coldly :

"It must be in the room at the end of the passage."

"Exactly," Marius replied, and added, "Do you know the house?"

The Inspector remained silent for a moment, and then answered, while warming his boot-heel at the door of the stove :

"Apparently so."

He went on between his teeth, talking less to Marius than to his cravat.

"Patron Minette must be mixed up in this."

This remark struck Marius.

"Patron Minette!" he said, "yes, I heard that name mentioned."

And he told the Inspector of the dialogue between the hairy man and the bearded man in the snow behind the wall in the Rue du Petit Banquier. The Inspector growled :

"The hairy man must be Burgon, and the bearded man Demi-liard, *alias* Deux-milliards."

He was again looking down and meditating. "As for Father What's-his-name, I guess who he is. There, I have burnt my greatcoat, they always make too large a fire in



these cursed stoves. No. 50-52, formerly the property of one Gorbeau."

Then he looked at Marius.

"You only saw the hairy man and the bearded man?"

"And Panchaud."

"You did not see a small dandy prowling about there?"

"No."

"Nor a heavy lump of a fellow, resembling the elephant in the Jardin des Plantes?"

"No."

"Nor a scamp who looks like an old red-tail?"

"No."

"As for the fourth, no one sees him, not even his pals and assistants. It is not surprising, therefore, that you did not perceive him."

"No. Who are all these men?" Marius asked.

The Inspector continued, "Besides, it is not their hour." He fell into silence, and presently added:

"50-52. I know the tenement. It is impossible for us to hide ourselves in the interior without the actors perceiving us, and then they would escape by putting off the farce. They are so modest, and frightened at an audience. That won't do, for I want to hear them sing and make them dance."

This soliloquy ended, he turned to Marius, and asked, as he looked at him searchingly:

"Would you be afraid?"

"Of what?" Marius asked.

"Of these men."

"No more than I am of you," Marius answered roughly, for he was beginning to notice that this policeman had not yet said "Sir."

The Inspector looked at Marius more intently still, and continued, with a sort of sententious solemnity:

"You speak like a brave man and like an honest man. Courage does not fear crime, nor honesty the authorities."

Marius interrupted him:

"That is all very well, but what do you intend doing?"

The Inspector restricted himself to saying:

"The lodgers in that house have latchkeys to let themselves in at night. You have one?"

"Yes," said Marius.

"Have you it about you?"

"Yes."

"Give it to me," the Inspector said.

Marius took the key out of his waistcoat pocket, handed it to the Inspector, and added :

"If you take my advice you will bring a strong force."

The Inspector gave Marius such a glance as Voltaire would have given a Provincial Academician who proposed a rhyme to him ; then he thrust both hands into his immense coat-pockets and produced two small steel pistols, of the sort called "knock-me-downs." He handed them to Marius, saying sharply and quickly :

"Take these. Go home. Conceal yourself in your room, and let them suppose you out. They are loaded ; both with two bullets. You will watch, as you tell me there is a hole in the wall. People will arrive ; let them go on a little. When you fancy the matter ripe, and you think it time to stop it, you will fire a pistol, but not too soon. The rest concerns me. A shot in the air, in the ceiling, I don't care where,—but, mind, not too soon. Wait till they begin to put the screw on. You are a lawyer, and know what that means."

Marius took the pistols, and placed them in a side pocket of his coat.

"They bulge like that, and attract attention," said the Inspector ; "put them in your trousers' pockets."

Marius did so.

"And now," the Inspector continued, "there is not a moment for any one to lose. What o'clock is it? Half-past two. You said seven?"

"Six o'clock," Marius corrected.

"I have time," the Inspector added ; "but only just time. Do not forget anything I have said to you. A pistol-shot."

"All right," Marius replied.

And as he put his hand on the latch to leave the room the Inspector shouted to him :

"By the way, if you should want me between this and then, come or send here. You will ask for Inspector Javert."

About three o'clock, Marius actually came across Jondrette in the Rue Mouffetard, and followed him. Jondrette was walking along, not at all suspecting that an eye was already fixed upon him. He left the Rue Mouffetard, and Marius saw him enter one of the most hideous lodging-houses in the Rue Gracieuse, where he remained for about a



quarter of an hour, and then returned to the Rue Mouffetard. He stopped at an ironmonger's shop, which was at that period at the corner of the Rue Pierre-Lombard; and a few minutes after Marius saw him come out of the shop, holding a large cold chisel set in a wooden handle, which he hid under his greatcoat. He then turned to his left and hurried toward the Rue du Petit Banquier. Day was drawing in, the snow, which had ceased for a moment, had begun again, and Marius concealed himself at the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier, which was deserted as usual, and did not follow Jondrette. It was lucky that he acted thus, for Jondrette, on reaching the spot where Marius had listened to the conversation of the hairy man and the bearded man, looked round, made sure that he was not followed, clambered over the wall, and disappeared. The unused ground which this wall enclosed communicated with the back-yard of a livery stable keeper of bad repute, who had been a bankrupt, and still had a few vehicles standing under sheds.

Marius thought it would be as well to take advantage of Jondrette's absence and return home. Besides, time was slipping away, and every evening Ma'am Bougon, when she went to wash up dishes in town, was accustomed to close the gate, and, as Marius had given his latchkey to the Inspector, it was important that he should be in time. Night had nearly set in along the whole horizon, and in the whole immensity there was only one point still illumined by the sun, and that was the moon, which was rising red behind the low dome of the Salpêtrière. Marius hurried to No. 50-52, and the gate was still open when he arrived. He went up the stairs on tiptoe, and glided along the passage-wall to his room. This passage, it will be remembered, was bordered on either side by rooms which were now to let, and Ma'am Bougon, as a general rule, left the doors open. While passing one of these doors, Marius fancied that he could see in the uninhabited room four men's heads vaguely lit up by a remnant of daylight, which fell through a window. Marius did not attempt to see, as he did not wish to be seen himself; and he managed to re-enter his room noiselessly and unseen. It was high time, for, a moment after, he heard Ma'am Bougon going out, and the house-gate shutting.

Marius sat down on his bed: it might be about half-past five, and only half an hour separated him from

what was about to happen. He heard his arteries beat as you hear the ticking of a clock in the darkness, and he thought of the double march which was taking place at this moment in the shadows,—crime advancing on one side, and justice coming up on the other. It no longer snowed; the moon, now very bright, dissipated the mist, and its rays, mingled with the white reflection from the fallen snow, imparted a twilight appearance to the room. There was a light in Jondrette's room, and Marius could see the hole in the partition glowing with a ruddy brilliancy that appeared to him the colour of blood. It was evident that this light could not be produced by a candle. There was no movement in the den, no one stirred there, no one spoke, there was not a breath, the silence was chilling and profound, and had it not been for the light, Marius might have fancied himself close to a grave. He gently took off his boots, and thrust them under the bed. Several minutes elapsed, and then Marius heard the house-gate creaking on its hinges, a heavy quick step ran up the stairs, and along the passage, the hasp of the door was noisily raised,—it was Jondrette returned home. All at once several voices were raised, and it was plain that the whole family were at home. They were merely silent in the master's absence, like the whelps in the absence of the wolves.

Marius heard him lay something heavy on the table, probably the chisel which he had bought.

"The mousetrap is open, and the cats are here," said he, and then lowering his voice, he added, "put this in the fire."

Marius heard some charcoal bars stirred with a pair of iron pincers, or some steel instrument, and Jondrette asked:

"Have you tallowed the hinges of the door, so that they may make no noise?"

"Yes," the mother answered.

"What o'clock is it?"

"Close on six. It has struck the half-hour at St. Medard."

"Hang it!" said Jondrette, "the girls must go on the watch. Come here and listen to me."

There was a whispering, and then Jondrette's voice was again uplifted.

"Has Ma'am Bougon gone?"

"Yes," the mother answered.



"Are you sure there is nobody in the neighbour's room?"

"He has not come in all day, and you know that this is his dinner-hour."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite."

"No matter," Jondrette added, "there is no harm in going to see whether he is in. Daughter, take the candle and go."

Marius fell on his hands and knees, and silently crawled under the bed; he had scarce done so ere he saw light through the cracks of his door.

"Papa," a voice exclaimed, "he is out."

He recognised the elder girl's voice.

"Have you been in his room?" the father asked.

"No," the girl replied, "but as his key is in his door he has gone out."

The father shouted:

"Go in all the same."

The door opened, and Marius saw the girl come in, candle in hand. She was the same as in the morning, save that she was even more fearful in this light. She walked straight up to the bed, and Marius suffered a moment of intense anxiety, but there was a looking-glass hanging from a nail by the bedside, and it was to that she proceeded. She stood on tiptoe and looked at herself; a noise of iron being moved could be heard in the other room. She smoothed her hair with her hand, and smiled in the glass, and sang, in her cracked and sepulchral voice. Still Marius trembled, for he thought that she could not but hear his breathing. She walked to the window and looked out, while saying aloud with the half-insane look she had:

"How ugly Paris is when it has put on a white sheet!"

She returned to the glass and began taking a fresh look at herself, first full face and then three-quarters.

"Well," asked the father, "what are you doing there?"

"I am looking under the bed and the furniture," she said, as she continued to smooth her hair; "but there is nobody."

"You she-devil," the father yelled. "Come here directly, and lose no time."

"Coming, coming," she said, "there's no time to do anything here."

She took a parting glance at the glass and went off,

closing the door after her. A moment later Marius heard the sound of the girls' naked feet pattering along the passage, and Jondrette's voice shouting to them :

"Pay attention ! one at the *barrière* and the other at the corner of the *Rue du Petit Banquier*. Do not lose the gate of this house out of sight, and if you see anything come back at once—at once—you have a key to let yourselves in."

The elder daughter grumbled :

"To stand sentry barefooted in the snow, what a treat !"

"To-morrow you shall have beetle-coloured silk boots," the father said.

They went down the stairs, and a few seconds later the sound of the gate closing below announced that they had reached the street. The only persons in the house now were Marius, the Jondrettes, and probably, too, the mysterious beings of whom Marius had caught a glimpse in the twilight behind the door of the untenanted garret.

## CHAPTER LXXVIII.

MARIUS judged that the time had come for him to resume his place at his observatory. In a second, and with the agility of his age, he was at the hole in the partition, and peeped through. The interior of Jondrette's lodging offered a strange appearance, and Marius was able to account for the peculiar light he had noticed. A candle was burning in a verdigrised candlestick, but it was not this which really illumined the room ; the whole den was lit up with the ruddy glow of a brasier standing in the fireplace, and filled with incandescent charcoal—it was the chafing-dish which the wife had prepared in the morning. The burner was red, a bluish flame played round it, and rendered it easy to recognise the shape of the chisel purchased by Jondrette, which was heating in the charcoal. In a corner, near the door, could be seen two heaps, one apparently of old iron, the other of ropes, arranged for some anticipated purpose.

The heat of the chafing-pan was so great that the candle on the table was melting and guttering on the side turned toward it. An old copper dark lantern, worthy of a Diogenes who had turned Cartouche, was standing on the mantelpiece. The chafing-dish, which stood in the fire



place, close to the decaying logs, sent its smoke up the chimney, and thus produced no smell. Jondrette's den, if our readers remember what we have said about the house, was admirably selected to serve as the scene of a violent and dark deed, and as a covert for crime. It was the furthest room in the most isolated house on the most deserted Parisian boulevard; and if a snare were not there already it would have been invented there. The whole length of a house and a number of uninhabited rooms separated this lair from the boulevard; and the only window in it looked out on fields enclosed by walls and boardings. Jondrette had lit his pipe, was seated on the bottomless chair and smoking, and his wife was speaking to him in a low voice.

If Marius had been Courfeyrac, that is to say, one of those men who laugh at every opportunity, he would have burst into a roar when his eye fell on Mother Jondrette. She had on a bonnet with black feathers, like the hats worn by the heralds at the coronation of Charles X., an immense tartan shawl over her cotton skirt, and the man's shoes, which her daughter had disdained in the morning.

"By the way," said Jondrette, "in such weather as this he will come in a hackney-coach. Light your lamp and go down, and keep behind the front gate; when you hear the vehicle stop you will open the gate at once, light him upstairs, and along the passage, and when he has come in here you will go down as quickly as you can, pay the coachman, and discharge him."

"Where's the money to come from?" the woman asked.

Jondrette felt in his pocket, and gave her five francs.

"What is this?" she exclaimed.

"The monarch which our neighbour gave us this morning," and he added, "We shall want two chairs, though."

"What for?"

"Why, to sit down."

Marius shuddered on hearing the woman make the quiet answer:

"Well, I will go and fetch our neighbour's."

And with a rapid movement she opened the door, and stepped into the passage. Marius had not really the time to get off the bureau and hide under his bed.

"Take the candle," Jondrette shouted.

"No," she said, "it would bother me, for I have two chairs to carry. Besides, the moon is shining."

Marius heard the heavy hand of Mother Jondrette fumbling for his key in the darkness. The door opened, and he remained nailed to his post by alarm and stupor. The woman came in; the skylight sent a moonbeam between two large patches of shade, and one of these patches entirely covered the wall against which Marius was standing, so that he disappeared. Mother Jondrette did not see Marius, took the two chairs, the only two that Marius possessed, and went off, noisily slamming the door after her. She re-entered the den.

"Here are the two chairs."

"And here is the lantern," the husband said. "Make haste down."

He placed the chairs on either side of the table, turned the chisel in the chafing-dish, placed in front of the fireplace an old screen, which concealed the charcoal-pan, and then went to the corner where the heap of rope lay, and stooped down as if examining something. Marius then perceived that what he had taken for a shapeless heap was a rope ladder, very well made with wooden rungs, and two hooks to hang it by. This ladder and a few large tools, perfect crowbars, which were mingled with the heap of old iron in the corner, had not been there in the morning, and had evidently been brought in the afternoon, during the absence of Marius.

The table and the two chairs were exactly opposite Marius, and, as the charcoal-pan was concealed, the room was only illumined by the candle, and the smallest article on the table or the chimney-piece cast a long shadow; a cracked water-jug hid half a wall. There was in this room a hideous and menacing calm, and an expectation of something awful could be felt. Jondrette had let his pipe go out, a sign of deep thought, and had just sat down again. The candle caused the stern and fierce angles of his face to stand out; he was frowning, and suddenly thrust out his right hand now and then, as if answering the final counsels of a dark internal soliloquy. In one of the obscure replies he made to himself he opened the table drawer, took out a long carving-knife hidden in it, and felt its edge on his thumb nail. This done, he put the knife in the drawer, which he closed again. Marius, on his side, drew the pistol from his pocket, and cocked it, which produced a sharp, clicking sound. Jondrette started, and half rose from his chair.



"Who's that?" he shouted.

Marius held his breath. Jondrette listened for a moment, and then said laughingly:

"What an ass I am! it is the partition creaking."

Marius held the pistol in his hand.

At this moment the distant and melancholy vibration of a bell shook the windows; six o'clock was striking at St. Medard's. Jondrette marked each stroke by a shake of the head, and when he had counted the last he snuffed the candle with his fingers. Then he began walking up and down the room, listened at the door, began walking again, and then listened once more. "I only hope he'll come," he growled, and then returned to his chair. He was hardly seated ere the door opened. Mother Jondrette had opened it, and remained in the passage making a horrible grimace, which one of the holes in the dark lantern lit up from below.

"Step in, sir," she said.

"Enter, my benefactor!" Jondrette repeated, as he hurriedly rose.

M. Leblanc appeared with that air of serenity which rendered him singularly venerable, and laid four louis on the table.

"Monsieur Fabantou, here is the money for your rent, and something more to put you a little straight. After that we will see."

"May Heaven repay you, my generous benefactor!" said Jondrette, and then rapidly approached his wife.

"Dismiss the hackney-coach."

She slipped away, while her husband made an infinitude of bows, and offered a chair to M. Leblanc. A moment after she returned, and whispered in his ear, "All right!"

The snow, which had not ceased to fall since morning, was now so thick that neither the arrival nor the departure of the coach had been heard. M. Leblanc had seated himself, and Jondrette now took possession of the chair opposite to him.

No sooner was M. Leblanc seated than he turned his eyes to the beds, which were empty.

"How is the poor little wounded girl?" he asked.

"Very bad," Jondrette replied with a heart-broken and grateful smile. "Very bad, my good sir. Her elder sister has taken her to La Bourbe to have her hand dressed. But you will see them, as they will return almost immediately."

"Madame Fabantou seems to me better?" M. Leblanc continued, taking a glance at the strange garb of Mother Jondrette, who, standing between him and the door, as if already guarding the outlet, was looking at him in a menacing and almost combative posture.

"She is dying," Jondrette said, "but what would you have, sir? that female has so much courage. She is not a female but an ox."

Mother Jondrette, affected by the compliment, protested with the affectation of a flattered monster:

"You are always too kind to me, Monsieur Jondrette."

"Jondrette?" said M. Leblanc, "why, I thought your name was Fabantou."

"Fabantou, *alias* Jondrette," the husband quickly replied, "a professional name."

And, giving his wife a shrug, which M. Leblanc did not see, he continued with an emphatic and caressing inflection of voice:

"Ah! that poor dear and I have ever lived happily together, for what would be left us if we had not that! we are so wretched, respectable sir. I have arms but no labour, a heart but no work. I do not know how the Government manage it, but, on my word of honour, sir, I am no Jacobin, I wish them no harm, but if I were the ministers, on my most sacred word, things would go differently. For instance, I wished my daughters to learn the trade of making paper boxes. You will say to me, 'What! a trade?' Yes, a trade, a simple trade, a breadwinner. What a fall, my benefactor! what degradation, after persons have been in such circumstances as we were, but, alas! nothing is left us from our prosperous days. Nothing but one article—a picture, to which I cling, but which I am ready to part with, as we must live."

While Jondrette was saying this with a kind of apparent disorder, which did not in any way alter the thoughtful and sagacious expression of his face, Marius raised his eyes and saw some one at the back of the room, whom he had not seen before. A man had just entered, but so softly that the hinges had not been heard to creak. This man had on an old worn-out, torn knitted jacket of violet colour, wide cotton velvet trousers, thick socks on his feet, and no shirt; his neck was bare, his arms were naked and tattooed, and his face was daubed with black. He seated himself silently, and with folded arms, on the nearest bed, and, as he was



behind Mother Jondrette, he could be but dimly distinguished. That sort of magnetic instinct which warns the eye caused M. Leblanc to turn almost at the same moment as Marius. He could not suppress a start of surprise, which Jondrette noticed.

"Ah, I see," Jondrette exclaimed, as he buttoned his coat complacently, "you are looking at your surtout? it fits me, really fits me capitally."

"Who is that man?" M. Leblanc asked.

"That?" said Jondrette, "oh, a neighbour; pay no attention to him."

The neighbour looked singular, but chemical factories abound in the Faubourg St. Marceau, and a workman may easily have a black face. M. Leblanc's whole person displayed a confident and intrepid candour, as he continued:

"I beg your pardon, but what were you saying, M. Fabantou?"

"I was saying, sir, and dear protector," Jondrette replied, as he placed his elbows on the table and gazed at M. Leblanc with fixed and tender eyes, very like those of a boa-constrictor, "I was saying that I had a picture to sell."

There was a slight noise at the door; a second man came in and seated himself on the bed behind Mother Jondrette. Like the first, he had bare arms and a mask, either of ink or soot. Though this man literally glided into the room he could not prevent M. Leblanc noticing him.

"Take no heed," said Jondrette, "they are men living in the house. I was saying that I had a valuable picture left; look here, sir."

He rose, walked to the wall, against which the panel to which we have already referred was leaning, and turned it round, while still letting it rest on the wall. It was something, in fact, that resembled a picture, and which the candle almost illumined. Marius could distinguish nothing, as Jondrette was standing between him and the picture, but he fancied he could catch a glimpse of a coarse daub, and a sort of principal character standing out of the canvas, with the bold crudity of a showman's pictures.

"What is that?" M. Leblanc asked.

Jondrette exclaimed:

"A masterpiece, a most valuable picture, my benefactor! I am as much attached to it as I am to my daughters, for it recalls dear memories; but, as I told you, and I will not

go back from my word, I am willing to dispose of it, as we are in such poverty."

Either by accident, or some vague feeling of anxiety, M. Leblanc's eye, while examining the picture, returned to the end of the room. There were now four men there, three seated on the bed and one leaning against the door-post, but all four bare-armed, motionless, and with blackened faces. One of those on the bed was leaning against the wall with closed eyes, apparently asleep; this one was old, and the white hair on the blackened face was horrible. The other two were young, one was hairy, the other bearded. Not a single one had shoes, and those who did not wear socks were barefooted. Jondrette remarked that M. Leblanc's eyes rested on these men.

"They are friends, neighbours," he said, "their faces are black because they are chimney-sweeps. Do not trouble yourself about them, sir, but buy my picture. Have pity on my misery. I will not ask much for it; what value do you set upon it?"

"Well," M. Leblanc said, looking Jondrette full in the face, like a man setting himself on guard, "it is some pot-house sign, and worth about three francs."

Jondrette replied gently:

"Have you your pocket-book about you? I shall be satisfied with a thousand crowns."

M. Leblanc rose, set his back against the wall, and took a hurried glance round the room. He had Jondrette on his left by the window, and on his right the woman and the four men by the door. The four men did not stir, and did not even appear to see him. Jondrette had begun talking again with a plaintive accent, and with such a wandering eye that M. Leblanc might fairly believe that he simply had before him a man driven mad by misery.

"If you do not buy my picture, dear benefactor," Jondrette said, "I have no resource remaining, and nothing is left me but to throw myself into the river. When I think that I wished my two daughters to learn how to make paper boxes for new-year's gifts. Well, for that you require a table with a hackboard to prevent the glasses falling on the ground, a stove made expressly, a pot with three compartments for the three different degrees of strength which the glue must have, according as it is used for wood, paper, and cloth; a board to cut pasteboard on, a hammer, a pair of pincers, and the deuce knows what,



and all that to gain four sous a day! and you must work fourteen hours! and each box passes thirteen times through the hands of the workgirl! and moistening the paper! and not spoiling anything! and keeping the glue hot! the devil! I tell you, four sous a day! How do you expect them to live?"

While speaking, Jondrette did not look at M. Leblanc, who was watching him. M. Leblanc's eye was fixed on Jondrette, and Jondrette's on the door, while Marius' gasping attention went from one to the other. M. Leblanc seemed to be asking himself, Is he a lunatic? and Jondrette repeated twice or thrice with all sorts of varied inflections in the suppliant style, "All that is left me is to throw myself into the river! the other day I went for that purpose down three steps by the side of the bridge of Austerlitz." All at once his eyes glistened with a hideous radiance, the little man drew himself up and became frightful, he walked a step toward M. Leblanc, and shouted, in a thundering voice:

"But all that is not the question! Do you know me?"

## CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE door of the garret had been suddenly flung open, disclosing three men in blue cloth blouses and wearing masks of black paper. The first was thin, and carried an iron-shod cudgel; the second, who was a species of Colossus, held a pole-axe by the middle; while the third, a broad-shouldered fellow, not so thin as the first, but not so stout as the second, was armed with an enormous key stolen from some prison-gate. It seemed as if Jondrette had been awaiting the arrival of these men, and a hurried conversation took place between him and the man with the cudgel.

"Is all ready?" asked Jondrette.

"Yes," the thin man replied.

"Where is Montparnasse?"

"He's stopped to talk to your eldest daughter."

"Is the trap ready?"

"Yes."

"With two good horses?"

"Excellent."

"Is it waiting where I ordered?"

"Yes.

"All right," said Jondrette.

M. Leblanc was very pale. He looked all round the room like a man who understands into what a snare he has fallen, and his head, turned toward all the heads that surrounded him, moved on his neck with an attentive and surprised slowness, but there was nothing in his appearance that resembled fear. He had formed an improvised bulwark of the table, and this man, who a moment before merely looked like an old man, had suddenly become an athlete, and laid his robust fist on the back of his chair with a formidable and surprising gesture. This old man, so firm and brave in the presence of such a danger, seemed to possess one of those natures which are courageous in the same way as they are good—easily and simply. The father of a woman we love is never a stranger to us, and Marius felt proud of this unknown man.

Three of the men whom Jondrette called chimney-sweeps had taken from the mass of iron, one a large chisel, another a pair of heavy pincers, and the third a hammer, and posted themselves in front of the door, without saying a word. The old man remained on the bed, merely opening his eyes, and Mother Jondrette was sitting by his side. Marius thought that the moment for interference was at hand, and raised his right hand to the ceiling in the direction of the passage, ready to fire his pistol. Jondrette, after finishing his colloquy with the three men, turned again to M. Leblanc, and repeated the question, with that low, restrained, and terrible laugh of his :

"Do you not recognise me?"

M. Leblanc looked him in the face and answered, "No!"

Jondrette then went up to the table, he bent over the candle with folded arms, and placed his angular and ferocious face as close as he could to M. Leblanc's placid face, and in this posture of a wild beast which is going to bite, he exclaimed :

"My name is not Fabantou or Jondrette, but my name is Thénardier, the landlord of the inn at Montfermeil! Do you hear me? Thénardier! Now do you recognise me?"

An almost imperceptible flush shot athwart M. Leblanc's forehead, and he answered, with his ordinary placidity, and without the slightest tremor in his voice :

"No more than before."



Marius did not hear this answer, and any one who had seen him at this moment in the darkness would have found him haggard, stunned, and crushed. At the moment when Jondrette said, "My name is Thénardier," Marius trembled in all his limbs, and he leant against the wall, as if he felt a cold sword-blade thrust through his heart. Then his right hand, raised in readiness to fire, slowly dropped, and at the moment when Jondrette repeated, "Do you hear me, Thénardier?" Marius' relaxing fingers almost let the pistol fall. Jondrette, by revealing who he was, did not affect M. Leblanc, but he stunned Marius, for he knew this name of Thénardier, which was apparently unknown to M. Leblanc. Only remember what that name was for him! He had carried it in his heart, recorded in his father's will! he bore it in the deepest shrine of his memory in the sacred recommendation "A man of the name of Thénardier saved my life; if my son meet this man he will do all he can for him." This name, it will be remembered, was one of the pieties of his soul, and he blended it with his father's name in his worship. What! This man was Thénardier, the landlord of Montfermeil, whom he had so long and so vainly sought! He found him now, and in what a state! His father's saviour was a bandit! this man, to whom Marius burned to devote himself, was a monster! the liberator of Colonel Pontmercy was on the point of committing a crime, whose outline Marius could not yet see very distinctly, but which resembled an assassination! And on whom? Great Heaven, what a fatality, what a bitter mockery of fate! His father commanded him from his tomb to do all in his power for Thénardier. During four years Marius had had no other idea but to pay this debt of his father's, and at the very moment when he was about to deliver over to justice a brigand, in the act of crime, destiny cried to him, "It is Thénardier!" and he was at length about to requite this man, for saving his father's life amid a hail-storm of grape-shot on the heroic field of Waterloo, by sending him to the scaffold! But, on the other hand, how could he witness a murder, and not prevent it? What, should he condemn the victim and spare the assassin? could he be bound by any ties of gratitude to such a villain? All the ideas which Marius had entertained for four years were, as it were, run through the body by this unexpected stroke. He trembled, all depended on him, and he held in his hands the unconscious beings who were moving before his eyes.

If he fired the pistol, M. Leblanc was saved and Thénardier lost; if he did not fire, M. Leblanc was sacrificed and Thénardier might, perhaps, escape. Must he hunt down the one, or let the other fall? there was remorse on either side. What should he do? which should he choose? He felt as if he were going mad. His knees gave way under him, and he had not even time to deliberate, as the scene he had before him was being performed with such furious precipitation. It was a tornado of which he had fancied himself the master, but which was carrying him away: he was on the verge of fainting.

In the meanwhile Thénardier (we will not call him otherwise in future) was walking up and down before the table, with a sort of wild and frenzied triumph. He seized the candlestick and placed it on the chimney-piece with such a violent blow that the candle nearly went out, and the tallow spattered the wall. Then he turned round furiously to M. Leblanc and spat forth these words.

"Ah! I have found you again, my excellent philanthropist! my millionaire with the threadbare coat! the giver of dolls! the old niggard! Ah, you do not recognise me. I suppose it wasn't you who came to my inn at Montfermeil just eight years ago, on the Christmas night of 1823! it wasn't you who carried off Fantine's child, the Lark! it wasn't you who wore a yellow watchman's coat, and had a parcel of clothes in your hand, just as you had this morning. Tell me, wife! It is his mania, it appears, to carry to houses bundles of woollen stockings, the old charitable humbug! Are you a cap-maker, my Lord millionaire? you give your profits to the poor, what a holy man! what a mountebank! Ah, you do not recognise me! well, I recognise you, and did so directly you thrust your muzzle in here. Ah, you will be taught that it is not a rosy game to go like that to people's houses, under the excuse that they are inns, with such a wretched coat and poverty-stricken look that they feel inclined to give you a sou, and then, to play the generous, rob them of their bread winner, and threaten them in the woods. I'll teach you that you won't get off, by bringing people when they are ruined a coat that is too large and two paltry hospital blankets, you old scamp, you child-stealer!"

He stopped, and for a moment seemed to be speaking to himself. It appeared as if his fury fell into some hole, like the Rhone: then, as if finishing aloud the things he had



just been saying to himself, he struck the table with his fist, and cried :

“ With his simple look ! ”

Then he apostrophised M. Leblanc.

“ By heaven ! you made a fool of me formerly, and are the cause of all my misfortunes. You got for fifteen hundred francs a girl who certainly belonged to rich parents, who had already brought me in a deal of money, and from whom I should have got an annuity ! That girl would have made up to me all I lost in that wretched pot-house, where I threw away like an ass all my blessed savings ! Oh, I wish that what was drunk at my house were poison to those who drank it ! However, no matter ! Tell me, I suppose you thought me a precious fool when you went off with the Lark. You had your cudgel in the forest, and were the stronger. To-day I shall have my revenge, for I hold all the trumps ; you are done, my good fellow. Oh ! how I laugh when I think that he fell into the trap ! ”

Thénardier stopped out of breath ; his little narrow chest panted like a forge-bellows. His eye was full of the ignoble happiness of a weak, cruel, and cowardly creature who is at length able to trample on the man he feared, and insult him whom he flattered ; it is the joy of a dwarf putting his heel on the head of Goliath, the joy of a jackal beginning to rend a sick bull, which is unable to defend itself, but still has sufficient vitality to suffer. M. Leblanc did not interrupt him, but said, when he ceased speaking :

“ I do not know what you mean, and you are mistaken. I am a very poor man, and anything but a millionaire. I do not know you, and you take me for somebody else.”

“ Ah ! ” Thénardier said hoarsely, “ a fine dodge ! So you adhere to that joke, eh, old fellow ? Ah, you do not remember, you do not see who I am ! ”

“ Pardon me, sir,” M. Leblanc replied, with a polite accent, which had something strange and grand about it at such a moment, “ I see that you are a bandit.”

“ Bandit ! yes, I know that you rich swells call us so. It is true that I have been bankrupt. I am in hiding, I have no bread, I have not a farthing, and I am a bandit ! For three days I have eaten nothing, and I am a bandit ! ah, you fellows warm your toes, you wear pumps made by Sakoski, you have wadded coats like archbishops, you live on the first floors of houses where a porter is kept, you eat truffles,

asparagus at forty francs the bundle in January, and green peas. You stuff yourselves, and when you want to know whether it is cold you look in the newspaper to see what Chevalier's thermometer marks; but we are the thermometers. But we will eat you, we will devour you, poor little chap! Monsieur le millionnaire, learn this: I was an established man, I held a licence, I was an elector, and am still a citizen, while you, perhaps, are not one!"

Here Thénardier advanced a step toward the men near the door, and added with a quiver:

"When I think that he dares to come and address me like a cobbler."

Then he turned upon M. Leblanc with a fresh outburst of frenzy:

"And know this, too, my worthy philanthropist, I am not a doubtful man, or one whose name is unknown, and who carries off children from houses! I am an ex-French soldier, and ought to have the cross! I was at Waterloo, and in the battle I saved the life of a General called the Comte de Pontmercy! The picture you see here, and which was painted by David at Bruqueselles—do you know whom it represents? it represents me, for David wished to immortalise the exploit. I have the General on my back, and I am carrying him through the grape-shot. That is the story! the General never did anything for me, and he is no better than the rest, but, for all that, I saved his life at the peril of my own, and I have my pockets filled with certificates of the fact. I am a soldier of Waterloo. And now that I have had the goodness to tell you all this, let us come to a finish; I want money, I want a deal of money, an enormous amount of money, or I shall exterminate you, by the thunder of heaven."

Marius had gained a little mastery over his agony, and was listening. The last possibility of doubt had vanished; it was really the Thénardier of the will. Marius shuddered at the charge of ingratitude cast at his father, and which he was on the point of justifying so fatally, and his perplexities were redoubled.

The masterpiece, the picture by David, which he offered M. Leblanc, was, as the reader will have perceived, nought else than his public-house sign, painted by himself, and the sole relic he had preserved from his shipwreck at Montfermeil. As he had stepped aside Marius was now enabled to look at this thing, and in the daub he really



recognised a battle, a background of smoke, and one man carrying another. It was the group of Thénardier and Pontmercy; the saviour sergeant and the saved colonel. Marius felt as if intoxicated, for this picture represented to some extent his loving father; it was no longer an inn sign-board but a resurrection; in it a tomb opened, from it a phantom rose. Marius heard his heart beating at his temples; he had the guns of Waterloo in his ears; his bleeding father vaguely painted on this ill-omened board startled him, and he fancied that the shapeless figure was gazing fixedly at him. When Thénardier regained breath he fastened his bloodshot eyes on M. Leblanc, and said to him in a low, sharp voice:

"What have you to say before we put the handcuffs on you?"

M. Leblanc was silent. In the midst of this silence a ropy voice uttered this mournful sarcasm in the passage:

"If there's any wood to be chopped, I'm your man."

It was the fellow with the pole-axe amusing himself. At the same time an immense, hairy, earth-coloured face appeared in the door with a frightful grin, which displayed not teeth but tusks. It was the face of the man with the pole-axe.

"Why have you taken off your mask?" Thénardier asked him furiously.

"To laugh," the man answered.

For some minutes past M. Leblanc had seemed to be watching and following every movement of Thénardier, who, blinded and dazzled by his own rage, was walking up and down the room, in the confidence of knowing the door guarded, of holding an unarmed man, and of being nine against one, even supposing that his wife only counted for one man. In his speech to the man with the pole-axe he turned his back to M. Leblanc; the latter took advantage of the opportunity, upset the chair with his foot, the table with his fist, and with one bound, ere Thénardier was able to turn, he was at the window. To open it and bstride the sill only took a second, and he was half out when six powerful hands seized him and energetically dragged him back into the room. The three "chimney-sweeps" had rushed upon him, and at the same time Mother Thénardier seized him by the hair. At the noise which ensued the other bandits ran in from the passage, and the old man on the bed, who seemed the worse for liquor, came up tottering

with a roadmender's hammer in his hand. One of the sweeps, whose blackened face the candle lit up, and in whom Marius recognised, in spite of the blackening, Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille, raised above M. Leblanc's head a species of life-preserver, made of two lumps of lead at the ends of an iron bar. Marius could not resist this sight. "My father," he thought, "forgive me!" and his finger sought the trigger. He was on the point of firing, when Thénardier cried:

"Do not hurt him."

This desperate attempt of the victim, far from exasperating Thénardier, had calmed him. There were two men in him, the ferocious man and the skilful man. Up to this moment, in the exuberance of triumph, and while standing before his motionless victim, the ferocious man had prevailed, but when the victim made an effort and appeared inclined to struggle, the skilful man reappeared and took the mastery.

"Do him no harm!" he repeated, and his first service was, though he little suspected it, that he stopped the discharge of the pistol, and paralysed Marius, to whom the affair did not appear so urgent, and who in the presence of this new phase saw no harm in waiting a little longer. Who knew whether some accident might not occur, which would deliver him from the frightful alternative of letting Ursule's father perish, or destroying the Colonel's saviour? A herculean struggle had commenced. With one blow of his fist in the chest M. Leblanc sent the old man rolling in the middle of the room, and then with two back-handers knocked down two other assailants, and held one under each of his knees. The villains groaned under this pressure as under a granite millstone, but the four others had seized the formidable old man by the arms and neck, and were holding him down upon the two "sweeps." Thus, master of two, and mastered by the others, crushing those beneath him, and crushed by those above him, M. Leblanc disappeared beneath this horrible group of bandits, like a boar attacked by a howling pack of dogs. They succeeded in throwing him on to the bed nearest the window, and held him down. Mother Thénardier did not once let go his hair.

"Don't you interfere," Thénardier said to her, "you will tear your shawl."

The woman obeyed, as the she-wolf obeys the wolf, with a snarl.



"You fellows," Thénardier continued, "can search him."

M. Leblanc appeared to have given up all thought of resistance, and they searched him. He had nothing about him but a leathern purse containing six francs and his handkerchief. Thénardier put the latter in his own pocket.

"What! no pocket-book?" he asked.

"No, and no watch," one of the sweeps replied.

"No matter," the masked man who held the large key muttered in the voice of a ventriloquist, "he is a tough old bird."

Thénardier went to the corner near the door, and took up some ropes, which he threw to them.

"Fasten him to the foot of the bed," he said, and noticing the old man whom M. Leblanc had knocked down still motionless on the floor, he asked:

"Is Boulatruelle dead?"

"No," Bigrenaille answered, "he's drunk."

"Sweep him into a corner," Thénardier said.

Two of the sweeps thrust the drunkard with their feet to the side of the old iron.

"Babet, why did you bring so many?" Thénardier said in a whisper to the man with the cudgel, "it was unnecessary."

"They all wanted to be in it," the man answered, "for the season is bad, and there's nothing doing."

The bed upon which M. Leblanc had been thrown was a sort of hospital bed, on four clumsy wooden legs. The bandits tied him firmly in an upright posture to the end of the bed, farthest from the window and nearest the chimney piece. When the last knot was tied Thénardier took a chair and sat down almost facing the prisoner. He was no longer the same man; in a few minutes his countenance had passed from frenzied violence to tranquil and cunning gentleness. Marius had a difficulty in recognising in this polite smile of an official the almost bestial mouth which had been foaming a moment previously; he regarded this fantastic and alarming metamorphosis with stupor, and he felt as a man would feel who saw a tiger changed into an attorney.

"Sir," said Thénardier, making a sign to the bandits who still held M. Leblanc to fall back; "leave me to talk with the gentleman," he said. All withdrew to the door, and he resumed:

"You did wrong to try and jump out of the window, for

you might have broken a leg. Now, with your permission, we will talk quietly ; and, in the first place, I will communicate to you a thing I have noticed, that you have not yet uttered the slightest cry."

Thénardier was right, the fact was so, although it had escaped Marius in his trouble. M. Leblanc had merely said a few words without raising his voice, and even in his struggle near the window with the six bandits he had preserved the profoundest and most singular silence. Thénardier went on :

"Good heavens ! you might have tried to call for help, and I should not have thought it improper. Such a thing as 'Murder !' is shouted on such occasions ; I should not have taken it in ill part. It is very simple that a man should make a bit of a row when he finds himself with persons who do not inspire him with sufficient confidence. If you had done so we should not have interfered with you or thought of gagging you, and I will tell you the reason why. This room is very deaf ; it has only that in its favour, but it has that. You might explode a bombshell here and it would not produce the effect of a drunkard's snore at the nearest post. It is a convenient lodging. But still you did not cry out. All the better, and I compliment you on it, and will tell you what conclusion I draw from the fact. My dear sir, when a man cries for help, who come ? the police ; and after the police ? justice. Well, you did not cry out, and so you are no more desirous than we are for the arrival of the police. The fact is—and I have suspected it for some time—that you have some interest in hiding something ; for our part, we have the same interest, and so we may be able to come to an understanding."

While saying this Thénardier was trying to drive the sharp points that issued from his eyes into his prisoner's conscience. Besides, his language, marked with a sort of moderate and cunning insolence, was reserved and almost chosen, and in this villain who was just before only a bandit could now be seen "the man who had studied for the priesthood." The silence which the prisoner had maintained, this precaution which went so far as the very forgetfulness of care for his life, this resistance so opposed to the first movement of nature, which is to utter a cry, troubled and painfully amazed Marius, so soon as his attention was drawn to it.



Thénardier's well-founded remark but rendered denser the mysterious gloom behind which was concealed the grave and peculiar face, to which Courfeyrac had thrown the sobriquet of M. Leblanc. But whoever this man might be, though bound with cords, surrounded by bandits, and half buried, so to speak, in a grave where the earth fell upon him at every step—whether in the presence of Thénardier furious or of Thénardier gentle—he remained impassive, and Marius could not refrain from admiring this face so superbly melancholy at such a moment. His was evidently a soul inaccessible to terror, and ignorant of what it is to be alarmed. He was one of those men who overcome the amazement produced by desperate situations. However extreme the crisis might be, however inevitable the catastrophe, he had none of the agony of the drowning man, who opens horrible eyes under water. Thénardier rose without any affectation, removed the screen from before the fireplace, and thus unmasked the chafing-pan full of burning charcoal, in which the prisoner could perfectly see the chisel at a white heat, and studded here and there with small red stars. Then he came back and sat down near M. Leblanc.

"I will continue," he said; "we can come to an understanding, so let us settle this amicably. I did wrong to let my temper carry me away just now. For instance, because you are a millionaire, I told you that I insisted on money, a great deal of money, an immense sum of money, and that was not reasonable. Good heavens! you may be rich, but you have burdens; for who is there that has not? I do not wish to ruin you, for I am not a bailiff after all. I am not one of those men who, because they have advantage of position, employ it to be ridiculous. Come, I will make a sacrifice on my side, and be satisfied with two hundred thousand francs."

M. Leblanc did not utter a syllable, and so Thénardier continued:

"You see that I put plenty of water in my wine. I do not know the amount of your fortune, but I am aware that you do not care for money, and a benevolent man like you can easily give two hundred thousand francs to an unfortunate parent. Of course, you are reasonable too; you cannot have supposed that I would take all that trouble this morning, and organise this affair to-night, which is a well-done job, in the opinion of these

gentlemen, merely to ask you for enough money to go and drink fifteen-sous wine and eat veal at Desnoyer's. But two hundred thousand francs, that's worth the trouble; once that trifle has come out of your pocket I will guarantee that you have nothing more to apprehend. You will say, 'But I have not two hundred thousand francs about me.' Oh, I am not exorbitant, and I do not insist on that. I only ask one thing of you: be good enough to write what I shall dictate."

Here Thénardier stopped, but added, laying a stress on the words and casting a smile on the chafing-dish.

"I warn you that I shall not accept the excuse that you cannot write."

A grand inquisitor might have envied that smile.

Thénardier pushed the table close up to M. Leblanc, and took pen, ink, and paper out of the drawer, which he left half open, and in which the long knife-blade flashed. He laid the sheet of paper before M. Leblanc.

"Write!" he said.

The prisoner at last spoke.

"How can you expect me to write? my arms are tied."

"That is true, I beg your pardon," said Thénardier; "you are quite right." And turning to Bigrenaille, he added, "Unfasten the gentleman's right arm."

Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille, obeyed Thénardier's orders, and when the prisoner's hand was free, Thénardier dipped the pen in the ink and handed it to him.

"Make up your mind, sir, that you are in our absolute power; no human interference can liberate you, and we should really be sorry to be forced to proceed to disagreeable extremities. I know neither your name nor your address, but I warn you that you will remain tied up here until the person commissioned to deliver the letter you are going to write has returned. Now be good enough to write."

"What?" the prisoner asked.

Thénardier began dictating: "My dear daughter."

The prisoner started, and raised his eyes to Thénardier, who went on:

"Come to me at once, for I want you particularly. The person who delivers this letter to you has instructions to bring you to me. I am waiting. Come in perfect confidence."



M. Leblanc wrote this down, and Thénardier resumed :

"By the way, efface that 'Come in perfect confidence,' for it might lead to a supposition that the affair is not perfectly simple, and create distrust."

M. Leblanc erased the words.

"Now," Thénardier added, "sign it. What is your name?"

The prisoner laid down the pen, and asked :

"For whom is this letter?"

"You know very well," Thénardier answered; "for the little one, I have just told you."

It was evident that Thénardier avoided mentioning the name of the girl in question: he called her "the Lark," he called her "the little one," but he did not pronounce her name. It was the precaution of a clever man who keeps his secret from his accomplices, and mentioning the name would have told them the whole affair, and taught them more than there was any occasion for them to know. So he repeated :

"Sign it. What is your name?"

"Urbain Fabre," said the prisoner.

Thénardier, with the movement of a cat, thrust his hand into his pocket and drew out the handkerchief found on M. Leblanc. He sought for the mark, and held it to the candle.

"U. F., all right, Urbain Fabre. Well, sign it U. F."

The prisoner did so.

"As two hands are needed to fold a letter, give it to me and I will do so."

This done, Thénardier added :

"Write the address, to 'Mademoiselle Fabre,' at your house. I know that you live somewhere near here in the neighbourhood of St. Jacques du Haut-pas, as you attend Mass there every day, but I do not know in what street. I see that you understand your situation, and as you have not told a falsehood about your name you will not do so about your address. Write it yourself."

The prisoner remained pensive for a moment, and then took up the pen and wrote :

"Mademoiselle Fabre, at M. Urbain Fabre's, No. 17 Rue St. Dominique d'Enfer."

Thénardier seized the letter with a sort of feverish convulsion.

"Wife," he shouted, and the woman came up. "Here

is the letter, and you know what you have to do. There is a hackney-coach down below, so be off at once." Then he turned to the man with the pole-axe, and said, "As you have taken off your false nose you can accompany her. Get up behind the coach. You know where you left it?"

"Yes," said the man, and depositing the axe in a corner, he followed the woman. As they were going away, Thénardier thrust his head out of the door and shouted down the passage.

"Mind and do not lose the letter! Remember you have two hundred thousand francs about you."

A minute had not elapsed when the crack of a whip could be heard rapidly retiring.

"All right," Thénardier growled, "they are going at a good pace; with a gallop like that she will be back in three quarters of an hour."

He drew up a chair to the fireside, and sat down with folded arms, holding his muddy boots to the chafing-dish.

"My feet are cold," he said.

Only five bandits remained in the den with Thénardier and the prisoner. It was plain that these men performed a crime like a job, tranquilly, without passion or pity, and with a sort of fatigue. They were heaped up in a corner like brutes, and were silent. Thénardier was warming his feet, and the prisoner had fallen back into his taciturnity. A sinister calmness had succeeded the formidable noise which had filled the garret a few moments previously. The candle, on which a large mushroom had formed, scarce lit up the immense room; the chafing-dish had grown black, and all these monstrous heads cast misshapen shadows upon the walls and the ceiling. No other sound was audible save the regular breathing of the old drunkard, who was asleep. Marius was waiting in a state of anxiety, which everything tended to augment. The enigma was more impenetrable than ever; who was this "little one," whom Thénardier had also called "the Lark,"—was she "his Ursule?" The prisoner had not seemed affected by this name of the Lark, and had answered with the most natural air in the world, "I do not know what you mean." On the other hand, the two letters U. F. were explained, they were Urbain Fabre, and Ursule's name was no longer Ursule. This is what Marius saw most clearly. A sort of frightful fascination kept him nailed to the spot, whence he surveyed



and commanded the whole scene. He stood there almost incapable of reflection and movement, as if annihilated by the frightful things which he saw close to him ; and he waited, hoping for some incident, no matter its nature, unable to collect his thoughts, and not knowing what to do.

"In any case," he said, "if she is the Lark, I shall see her, for Mother Thénardier will bring her here. In that case I will give my life and blood, should it be necessary, to save her, and nothing shall stop me."

Nearly half an hour passed in this way ; Thénardier seemed absorbed in dark thoughts, and the prisoner did not stir. Still Marius fancied that he could hear at intervals a low, dull sound in the direction of the prisoner. All at once Thénardier addressed his victim.

"By the way, M. Fabre," he said, "I may as well tell you something at once."

As these few words seemed the commencement of an explanation, Marius listened carefully. Thénardier continued :

"My wife will be back soon, so do not be impatient. I believe that the Lark is really your daughter, and think it very simple that you should keep her, but listen to me for a moment. My wife will go to her with your letter, and I told Madame Thénardier to dress herself in the way you saw, that your young lady might make no difficulty about following her. They will both get into the hackney-coach with my comrade behind ; near a certain barrier there is a trap drawn by two excellent horses ; your young lady will be driven up to it in the hackney-coach, and get into the trap with my pal, while my wife returns here to report progress. As for your young lady, no harm will be done her ; she will be taken to a place where she will be all safe, and so soon as you have handed me the trifle of two hundred thousand francs she will be restored to you. If you have me arrested, my pal will settle the Lark, that's all."

The prisoner did not utter a word, and after a pause Thénardier continued :

"It is simple enough, as you see, and there will be no harm, unless you like to make harm. I have told you all about it, and warned you, that you might know."

He stopped, but the prisoner did not interrupt the silence, and Thénardier added :

"So soon as my wife has returned and said to me, 'The Lark is on her way,' we will release you, and you can sleep at home if you like. You see that we have no ill intentions."

Frightful images passed across the mind of Marius. What! they were not going to bring the girl here! One of the monsters was going to carry her off in the darkness! where? Oh, if it were she! and it was plain that it was so. Marius felt the beating of his heart stop; what should he do? fire the pistol and deliver all these villains into the hands of justice? But the hideous man with the pole-axe could not be the less out of reach with the girl, and Marius thought of Thénardier's words, whose sanguinary meaning he could read,—“If you have me arrested, my pal will settle the Lark.” Now he felt himself checked, not only by the Colonel's will, but by his love, and the peril of her whom he loved. The frightful situation, which had already lasted above an hour, changed its aspect at every moment, and Marius had the strength to review in turn all the most frightful conjectures, while seeking a hope and finding none. The tumult of his thoughts contrasted with the lugubrious silence of the den. In the midst of this silence, the sound of the staircase door being opened and shut became audible. The prisoner gave a start in his bonds.

“Here's my wife,” said Thénardier.

He had scarce finished speaking when Mother Thénardier rushed into the room, red, out of breath, and with flashing eyes, and shouted as she struck her thighs with her two big hands:

“A false address.”

The brigand, who had accompanied her, appeared behind, and took up his pole-axe again.

“A false address?” Thénardier repeated, and she went on:

“No Monsieur Urbain Fabre known at No. 17 Rue St. Dominique. They never heard of him.”

She stopped to snort, and then continued:

“Monsieur Thénardier, that old villain has made a fool of you; for you are too good-hearted, I keep on telling you. I would have cut his throat to begin with! and if he had sulked I would have boiled him alive! that would have made him speak and tell us where his daughter is, and where he keeps his money. That is how I should have managed the affair. People are right when they say that men are more stupid than women. Nobody at No. 17, it is a large gateway. No Monsieur Fabre at No. 17, and we went at a gallop, with a fee for the driver and all! I spoke



to the porter and his wife, who is a fine, tall woman, and they did not know anybody of the name."

Marius breathed again, for She, Ursule, or the Lark—he no longer knew her name—was saved. While the exasperated woman was vociferating, Thénardier sat down at the table; he remained for some minutes without saying a word, balancing his right leg and looking at the chaling-dish with an air of savage reverie. At last he said to the prisoner slowly, and with a peculiarly ferocious accent:

"A false address? why, what did you hope for by that?"

"To gain time!" the prisoner thundered.

And at the same moment he shook off his bonds, which were cut through: the prisoner was only fastened to the bed by one leg. Ere the seven men had time to look about them and rush forward, he had stretched out his hand toward the fireplace, and the Thénardiens and the brigands, driven back by surprise to the end of the room, saw him almost free, and in a formidable attitude, waving round his head the red-hot chisel, from which a sinister glare shot.

In the judicial inquiry that followed this affair it was stated that a large sou, cut and worked in a peculiar manner, was found in the garret, when the police made their descent upon it. It was one of those marvels of industry which the patience of the galleys engenders in the darkness and for the darkness—marvels which are nought but instruments of escape. These hideous and yet delicate products of a prodigious art are in the jewellery trade what slang metaphors are in poetry; for there are Benvenuto Cellinis at the galleys, in the same way as there are Villons in language. The wretch who aspires to deliverance, finds means, without tools, or, at the most, with an old knife, to saw a sou in two, hollow out the two parts without injuring the dies, and form a thread in the edge of the sou, so that the sou may be reproduced. It screws and unscrews at pleasure, and is a box; and in this box a watch-spring saw is concealed, which, if well managed, will cut through fetters and iron bars. It is believed that the unhappy convict possesses only a sou; but, not at all, he possesses liberty. It was a sou of this nature which was found by the police under the bed near the window, and a small saw of blue steel, which could be easily concealed in the sou, was also discovered. It is probable that at the moment when the bandits searched the prisoner he had the double sou about him, and hid it in his palm; and his right hand being at

liberty afterwards, he unscrewed it, and employed the saw to cut the ropes. This would explain the slight noise and the almost imperceptible movements which Marius had noticed. As, however, he was unable to stoop down for fear of betraying himself, he had not cut the cord on his left leg. The bandits gradually recovered from their surprise.

"Be easy," said Bigrenaille to Thénardier, "he is still held by one leg, and will not fly away. I put the pack-thread round that paw."

Here the prisoner raised his voice:

"You are villains, but my life is not worth so much trouble to defend. As for imagining that you could make me speak, make me write what I do not wish to write, or make me say what I do not intend to say——"

He pulled up the sleeve of his left arm, and added:

"Look here!"

At the same time he stretched out his arm, and placed on the naked flesh the red-hot chisel, which he held in his right hand by the wooden handle. Then could be heard the frizzling of the burnt flesh, and the smell peculiar to torture-rooms spread through the garret. Marius tottered in horror, and the brigands themselves shuddered—but the face of the strange old man was scarce contracted, and while the red-hot steel was burying itself in the smoking wound, he—impassive and almost august—fixed on Thénardier his beautiful glance, in which there was no hatred, and in which suffering disappeared in a serene majesty. For in great and lofty natures the revolt of the flesh and of the senses when suffering from physical pain make the soul appear on the brow, in the same way as the mutiny of troops compels the captain to show himself.

"Villains," he said, "be no more frightened of me than I am of you."

And, tearing the chisel out of the wound, he hurled it through the window, which had been left open. The horrible red-hot tool whirled through the night, and fell some distance off in the snow, which hissed at the contact. The prisoner continued:

"Do to me what you like."

He was defenceless.

"Seize him," said Thénardier.

Two of the brigands laid their hands on his shoulders, and the masked man with the ventriloquist voice stood in front of him, ready to dash out his brains with a blow of



the key at the slightest movement on his part. At the same time Marius heard below him, but so close that he could not see the speakers, the following remarks exchanged in a low voice :

"There is only one thing to be done."

"Cut his throat!"

"Exactly."

It was the husband and wife holding counsel, and then Thénardier walked slowly to the table, opened the drawer, and took out the knife. Marius clutched the handle of the pistol in a state of extraordinary perplexity. For above an hour he had heard two voices in his conscience, one telling him to respect his father's will, while the other cried to him to succour the prisoner. These two voices continued their struggle uninterruptedly, and caused him an agony. He had vaguely hoped up to this moment to find some mode of reconciling these two duties, but nothing possible had occurred to him. Still the peril pressed; the last moment of delay was passed, for Thénardier, knife in hand, was reflecting a few paces from the prisoner. Marius looked wildly around him, which is the last mechanical resource of despair. All at once he started; at his feet on his table a bright moonbeam lit up and seemed to point out to him a sheet of paper. On this sheet he read this line, written in large letters that very morning by the elder of Thénardier's daughters :

"HERE ARE THE SLOPS."

An idea, a flash, crossed Marius' mind; this was the solution of the frightful problem that tortured him, sparing the assassin and saving the victim. He knelt down on the bureau, stretched forth his arm, seized the paper, softly detached a lump of plaster from the partition, wrapped it up in the paper, and threw it through the hole into the middle of the den. It was high time, for Thénardier had overcome his last fears, or his last scruples, and was going toward the prisoner.

"There's something falling," his wife cried.

"What is it?" her husband asked.

The woman had bounded forward, and picked up the lump of plaster wrapped in paper, which she handed to her husband.

"How did it get here?" Thénardier asked.

"Why, hang it," his wife asked, "how do you expect that it did? through the window, of course."

"I saw it pass," said Bigrenaille.

Thénardier rapidly unfolded the paper, and held it close to the candle.

"Eponine's handwriting,—the devil!"

He made a signal to his wife, who hurried up to him, and showed her the line written on the paper, then added in a hollow voice:

"Quick, the ladder! we must leave the bacon in the trap."

"Without cutting the man's throat?" the Megæra asked.

"We haven't the time."

"Which way?" Bigrenaille remarked.

"By the window," Thénardier replied; "as Ponine threw the stone through the window, that's a proof that the house is not beset on that side."

The mask with the ventriloquist voice laid his key on the ground, raised his arms in the air, and opened and shut his hands thrice rapidly, without saying a word. This was like the signal for clearing for action aboard ship; the brigands who held the prisoner let him go, and in a twinkling the rope-ladder was dropped out of window, and securely fastened to the sill by the two iron hooks. The prisoner paid no attention to what was going on around him, he seemed to be thinking or praying. So soon as the ladder was fixed, Thénardier cried:

"The lady first."

And he dashed at the window, but as he was stepping out, Bigrenaille roughly seized him by the collar.

"No, no, my old joker, after us!" he said.

"After us!" the bandits yelled.

"You are children," said Thénardier, "we are losing time, and the police are at our heels."

"Very well then," said one of the bandits, "let us draw lots as to who shall go first."

Thénardier exclaimed:

"Are you mad? are you drunk? Why, what a set of humbugs; lose time, I suppose, draw lots, eh? with a wet finger? a short straw? write our names and put them in a cap?"

"May I offer my hat?" a voice said at the door.

All turned; it was Javert, who held his hat in his hand and offered it smilingly.



Javert had posted his men at nightfall, and ambushed himself behind the trees of the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins, which joins No. 50-52 on the other side of the boulevard. He began by opening his "pocket," in order to thrust into it the two girls ordered to watch the approaches to the den, but he had only "nailed" Azelma; as for Eponine, she was not at her post, she had disappeared, and he had not been able to seize her. Then Javert took up his post, and listened for the appointed signal. The departure and return of the hackney-coach greatly perplexed him; at length he grew impatient, and feeling sure that there "was a nest there," and of being in "luck's way," and having recognised several of the bandits who went in, he resolved to enter without waiting for the pistol-shot. It will be remembered that he had Marius' latchkey, and he arrived just in time.

The startled bandits dashed at the weapons, which they had thrown into corners at the moment of their attempted escape; and in less than a second, these seven men, formidable to look at, were grouped in a posture of defence, one with his pole-axe, another with his key, a third with his life-preserver, the others with chisel, pincers, and hammer, and Thénardier with his knife in his fist. The woman picked up an enormous paving-stone which lay in the angle of the room, and which served her daughter as a footstool. Javert restored his hat to his head, and walked into the room, with folded arms, his cane hanging from his wrist, and his sword in his scabbard.

"Halt!" he shouted, "you will not leave by the window, but by the door, which is not so unhealthy. You are seven and we are fifteen, so do not let us quarrel like water-carriers, but behave as gentlemen."

Bigrenaille drew a pistol from under his blouse, and placed it in Thénardier's hand, as he whispered:

"It is Javert, and I dare not fire at that man. Dare you?"

"I should think so," Thénardier answered.

"Well, fire."

Thénardier took the pistol and aimed at Javert; the Inspector who was only three paces from him, looked at him fixedly, and contented himself with saying:

"Don't fire, for the pistol won't go off."

Thénardier pulled the trigger; there was a flash in the pan.

"Did I not tell you so?" Javert remarked.

Bigrenaille threw his life-preserver at Javert's feet.

"You are the Emperor of the devils, and I surrender."

"And you?" Javert asked the other bandits.

They answered, "We too."

Javert remarked calmly:

"That is all right, I begged you to behave like gentlemen."

"I only ask one thing," Bigrenaille remarked, "that my 'baccy mayn't be stopped while I'm in solitary confinement."

"Granted," said Javert.

Then he turned and shouted, "You can come in now."

A squad of police, sword in hand, and agents armed with bludgeons and sticks, rushed in at Javert's summons, and bound the robbers. This crowd of men, scarce illumined by the candle, filled the den with shadows.

"Handcuff them all," Javert cried.

"Just come this way," a voice shouted, which was not that of a man, but of which no one could have said, "It is a woman's voice." Mother Thénardier had entrenched herself in one of the angles of the window, and it was she from whom this roar had come. The police and the agents fell back; she had thrown off her shawl and kept her bonnet on; her husband, crouching behind her, almost disappeared under the fallen shawl, and she covered him with her body, while raising the paving-stone above her head with both hands, like a giantess about to heave a rock.

"Heads below!" she screeched.

All fell back upon the passage, and there was a large open space in the centre of the garret. The hag took a glance at the bandits, who had suffered themselves to be bound, and muttered, in a hoarse and guttural voice,—

"The cowards!"

Javert smiled, and walked into the open space which the woman guarded with her eyes.

"Don't come nearer," she shrieked, "or I'll smash you. Be off!"

"What a grenadier!" said Javert, "the mother! you have a beard like a man, but I have claws like a woman."

And he continued to advance. Mother Thénardier, with flying hair and terrible looks, straddled her legs, bent back, and wildly hurled the paving-stone at Javert. He stooped, the stone passed over him, struck the wall, from which it dislodged a mass of plaster, and then ricocheted from angle



to angle till it fell exhausted at Javert's feet. At the same moment Javert reached the Thénardiens; one of his large hands settled on the wife's shoulder, the other on the husband's head.

"Handcuffs here!" he shouted.

The policemen flocked in, and in a few seconds Javert's orders were carried out. The woman, quite crushed, looked at her own and her husband's manacled hands, fell on the ground, and, bursting into tears, cried:

"My daughters."

"Oh, they are all right," said Javert.

By this time the police had noticed the drunken man sleeping behind the door, and shook him; he woke up, and stammered:

"Is it all over, Jondrette?"

"Yes," Javert answered.

The six bound bandits were standing together, with their spectral faces, three daubed with black, and three masked.

"Keep on your masks," said Javert.

And, passing them in review, like a Frederick II. at a Potsdam parade, he said to the three "sweeps":

"Good-day, Bigrenaille." "Good-day, Brujon." "Good-day, Deux-milliards."

Then turning to the three masks, he said to the man with the pole-axe, "Good-day, Gueulemer," and to the man with the cudgel, "Good-day, Babet," and to the ventriloquist, "Here's luck, Claquesous."

At this moment he noticed the prisoner, who had not said a word since the arrival of the police, and held his head down.

"Untie the gentleman," said Javert, "and let no one leave the room."

After saying this he sat down in a lordly way at the table, on which the candle and the inkstand were still standing, took a stamped paper from his pocket, and began writing his report. When he had written a few lines, which are always the same formula, he raised his eyes.

"Bring the gentleman here whom these gentlemen had tied up."

The agents looked round.

"Well," Javert asked, "where is he?"

The prisoner of the bandits, M. Leblanc, M. Urbain Fabre, the father of Ursule or the Lark, had disappeared. The door was guarded, but the window was not. So soon as he found himself released, and while Javert was writing,

he took advantage of the trouble, the tumult, the crowd, the darkness, and the moment when attention was not fixed upon him, to rush to the window. An agent ran up and looked out; he could see nobody, but the rope-ladder was still trembling.

"The devil!" said Javert between his teeth, "he must have been the best of the lot."

On the day after that in which these events occurred in the house on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, a lad, who apparently came from the bridge of Austerlitz, was trudging along the right-hand walk in the direction of the Barrière de Fontainebleau, at about nightfall. This boy was pale, thin, dressed in rags, wearing canvas trousers in the month of February, and singing at the top of his lungs. He reached No. 50-52 Gorbeau, and, finding the gate closed, began giving it re-echoing and heroic kicks. The old portress made her appearance.

"Hilloh! it's the old woman," said the boy. "Good-evening, my dear Bougonmuche, I have come to see my ancestors."

The old woman answered with a composite grimace, an admirable instance of hatred taking advantage of old age and ugliness, which was unfortunately lost in the darkness,—

"There's nobody here, scamp."

"Nonsense," the boy said, "where's father?"

"At La Force."

"Hilloh! and mother?"

"At Saint Lazare."

"Very fine! and my sisters?"

"At Les Madelonnettes."

The lad scratched the back of his ear, looked at Ma'am Bougon, and said, "Ah!"

Then he turned on his heels, and a moment later the old woman, who was standing in the gateway, heard him singing in his clear young voice, as he went off under the elms which were quivering in the winter breeze.

## CHAPTER LXXX.

1831 and 1832, the two years immediately attached to the Revolution of July, contain the most peculiar and striking moments of history, and these two years, amid those that precede and follow them, stand out like mountains. They



possess the true revolutionary grandeur, and precipices may be traced in them. The social masses, the foundations of civilisation, the solid group of superimposed and adherent interests, and the secular profiles of the ancient Gaelic formations, appear and disappear every moment through the stormy clouds of systems, passions, and theories. These apparitions and disappearances were called resistance and movement, but, at intervals, truth, the daylight of the human soul, flashes through all.

Revolutions have a terrible arm and a lucky hand; they hit hard and choose well. Even when incomplete, bastardised, and reduced to the state of a younger revolution, like that of 1830, they nearly always retain sufficient providential light not to fall badly, and their eclipse is never an abdication. Still we must not boast too loudly, for revolutions themselves are mistaken, and grave errors have been witnessed ere now. Let us return to 1830, which was fortunate in its deviation. In the establishment which was called order after the Revolution was cut short, the king was worth more than the Royalty. Louis Philippe was a rare man.

Son of a father to whom history will certainly grant extenuating circumstances, but as worthy of esteem as his father was of blame; possessing all the private virtues and several of the public virtues, careful of his health, his fortune, his person, and his business affairs; knowing the value of a minute, but not always the value of a year; sober, serious, peaceful, and patient; a good man and a good prince; sleeping with his wife, and having in his palace lackeys whose business it was to show the conjugal couch to the citizens—a regular ostentation which had grown useful after the old illegitimate displays of the elder branch; acquainted with all the languages of Europe, and, what is rarer still, with all the languages of all the interests, and speaking them; an admirable representative of the “middle classes,” but surpassing them, and in every way greater; possessing the excellent sense, while appreciating the blood from which he sprang, of claiming merit for his personal value, and very particular on the question of his race by declaring himself an Orleans and not a Bourbon; a thorough first prince of the blood, so long as he had only been Most Serene Highness, but a frank bourgeois on the day when he became His Majesty; diffuse in public, and concise in private life; branded as a miser, but not proved



to be one ; in reality, one of those saving men who are easily prodigal to satisfy their caprices or their duty ; well read, and caring but little for literature ; a gentleman, but not a cavalier ; simple, calm, and strong ; adored by his family and his household ; a seductive speaker, a disabused and cold-hearted statesman, swayed by the immediate interest, governing from hand to mouth ; incapable of rancour and of gratitude ; pitilessly employing superiorities upon mediocrities, and clever in confounding by parliamentary majorities those mysterious unanimities which growl hoarsely beneath thrones ; expansive, at times imprudent in his expansiveness, but displaying marvellous skill in his imprudence ; fertile in expedients, faces, and masks ; terrifying France by Europe, and Europe by France ; loving his country undeniably, but preferring his family ; valuing domination more than authority, and authority more than dignity ; a temperament which has this mournful feature about it, that, by turning everything to success, it admits of craft and does not absolutely repudiate baseness, but at the same time has this advantage, that it preserves politics from violent shocks, the state from fractures, and society from catastrophes ; minute, correct, vigilant, attentive, sagacious, and indefatigable ; contradicting himself at times, and belying himself ; bold against Austria at Ancona, obstinate against England in Spain, bombarding Antwerp and paying Pritchard ; singing the Marseillaise with conviction ; inaccessible to despondency, to fatigue, to a taste for the beautiful and ideal, to rash generosity, to Utopias, chimeras, anger, vanity, and fear ; possessing every form of personal bravery ; a general at Valmy, a private at Jemappes ; eight times attacked by regicides, and constantly smiling ; brave as a grenadier, and courageous as a thinker ; merely anxious about the chances of a European convulsion, and unfitted for great political adventures ; ever ready to risk his life, but not his work ; disguising his will under influence for the sake of being obeyed rather as an intellect than as king ; gifted with observation and not with divination ; paying but slight attention to minds, but a connoisseur in men, that is to say, requiring to see ere he could judge ; endowed with prompt and penetrating sense, fluent tongue, and a prodigious memory, and incessantly drawing on that memory, his sole similitude with Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon ; knowing facts, details, dates,



and proper names, but ignorant of the various passions and tendencies of the crowd, the internal aspirations and concealed agitation of minds—in one word, of all that may be called the invisible currents of consciences; accepted by the surface, but agreeing little with the lower strata of French society; getting out of scrapes by skill; governing too much and not reigning sufficiently; his own Prime Minister; excellent in the art of setting up the littleness of realities as an obstacle to the immensity of ideas; mingling with a true creative faculty of civilisation, order, and organisation, I do not know what pettifogging temper and chicanery; the founder of a family and at the same time its man-of-law; having something of Charlemagne and something of an attorney in him; but, on the whole, as a lofty and original figure, as a prince who managed to acquire power in spite of the anxiety of France, and influence in spite of the jealousy of Europe,—Louis Philippe would be ranked among the eminent men of his age, and among the most illustrious governors known in history, if he had loved glory a little, and had a feeling for what is grand to the same extent as he had a feeling for what is useful.

Louis Philippe had been handsome, and when aged, remained graceful: though not always admired by the nation, he was always so by the mob, for he had the art of pleasing and the gift of charm. He was deficient in majesty, and neither wore a crown though king, nor displayed white hair though an old man. His manners belonged to the ancient régime, and his habits to the new, a mixture of the noble and the citizen which suited 1830. Louis Philippe was transition on a throne. He went but rarely to Mass, not at all to the chase, and never to the opera: he was incorruptible by priests, whippers-in, and ballet girls, and this formed part of his citizen popularity. He had no Court, and went out with an umbrella under his arm, and this umbrella for a long time formed part of his glory. He was a bit of a mason, a bit of a gardener, and a bit of a surgeon: he bled a postilion who had fallen from his horse, and no more thought of going out without his lancet than Henry III. would without his dagger. The Royalists ridiculed this absurd king, the first who shed blood in order to cure.

At the moment, when the drama we are recounting is about to enter one of those tragic clouds which cover the

beginning of the reign of Louis Philippe, it was quite necessary that this book should give an explanation about that king. Louis Philippe had entered upon the royal authority without violence or direct action on his part, through a revolutionary change of wind, which was evidently very distinct from the real object of the Revolution, but in which he, the Duc d'Orleans, had no personal initiative. He was born a prince, and believed himself elected king; he had not given himself these functions, nor had he taken them; they were offered to him and he accepted, convinced, wrongly as we think, but still convinced, that the office was in accordance, and acceptance in harmony, with duty. Hence came an honest possession, and we say in all conscience that, as Louis Philippe was honest in the possession, and democracy honest in its attack, the amount of terror disengaged from social struggles can not be laid either on the king or the democracy.

Toward the end of April matters became aggravated, and the fermentation assumed the proportions of an ebullition. Since 1830 there had been small partial revolts, quickly suppressed, but breaking out again, which were the sign of a vast subjacent conflagration, and of something terrible smouldering. A glimpse could be caught of the lineaments of a possible revolution, though it was still indistinct and badly lighted. France was looking at Paris, and Paris at the Faubourg St. Antoine. The wine-shops in the Rue de Charonne were grave and stormy, though the conjunction of these two epithets applied to wine-shops appears singular. The Government was purely and simply put upon its trial on this, and men publicly discussed whether "they should fight or remain quiet." There were back rooms in which workmen swore to go into the streets at the first cry of alarm, "and fight without counting their enemies." Once they had taken the pledge, a man seated in a corner of the wine-shop shouted in a sonorous voice, "You hear? You have sworn!" Sometimes they went up to a private room on the first floor, where scenes almost resembling masonic ceremonies took place, and the novice took oaths, "in order to render a service to himself as well as to the fathers of families,"—such was the formula. In the tap-rooms, "subversive" pamphlets were read, and, as a secret report of the day says, "they spurned the Government."



Remarks like the following could be heard,—“I do not know the names of the chiefs; we shall not know the day till two hours beforehand.” A workman said, “We are three hundred, let us each subscribe ten sous, and we shall have one hundred and fifty francs, with which to manufacture bullets and gunpowder.” Another said, “I do not ask for six months, I do not ask for two. Within a fortnight we shall be face to face with the Government, for it is possible to do so with twenty-five thousand men.” Another said, “I do not go to bed at nights now, for I am making cartridges.” From time to time well-dressed men came, who pretended to be embarrassed, shook hands with the more important, and then went away, never staying longer than ten minutes, and significant remarks were exchanged in whispers, “The plot is ripe, the thing is ready;” to borrow the remark of one of the audience, “This was buzzed by all present.” The excitement was so great, that one day a workman said openly in a wine-shop, “But we have no weapons;” to which a comrade replied, “The soldiers have them,” unconsciously parodying Bonaparte’s proclamation to the army of Italy. “When they had any very great secret,” a report adds, “they did not communicate it,” though we do not understand what they could conceal after what they had said. The meetings were sometimes periodical; at certain ones there were never more than eight or ten members present, and they were always the same, but at others any one who liked went in, and the room was so crowded that they were obliged to stand; some went there through enthusiasm and passion, others “because it was on the road to their work.” In the same way as during the Revolution, there were female patriots in these wine-shops, who kissed the new-comers.

All this fermentation was public, we might almost say calm, and the impending insurrection prepared its storm quietly in the face of the Government. No singularity was lacking in this crisis, which was still subterranean, but already perceptible. The citizens spoke peacefully to the workmen of what was preparing. They said, “How is the revolt going on?” in the same tone as they would have said, “How is your wife?” A furniture broker in the Rue Moreau asked, “Well, when do you attack?” and another shopkeeper said, “They will attack soon, I know it. A month ago there were fifteen thousand of



you, and now there are twenty-five thousand." He offered his gun, and a neighbour offered a pocket pistol which was marked for sale at seven francs. The revolutionary fever spread, and no point of Paris or of France escaped it. The artery throbbed everywhere, and the network of secret societies began spreading over the country like the membranes which spring up from certain inflammations, and are formed in the human body. From the "Association of the Friends of the People," which was at the same time public and secret, sprang the "Society of the Rights of Man," which thus dated one of its orders of the day, *Pluviôse, year 40 of the Republican Era*; a society which was destined even to survive the decrees that suppressed it, and which did not hesitate to give to its sections significant titles like the following:

"*Pikes. The Tocsin. The Alarm Gun. The Phrygian Cap. January 21. The Beggars. The Mendicants. March Forward. Robespierre. The Level. Ça ira.*"

The Society of the Rights of Man engendered the Society of Action, composed of impatient men who detached themselves and hurried forward. Other associations tried to recruit themselves in the great mother societies: and the Sectionists complained of being tormented. Such were the "Gaulish Society," and the "Organising Committee of the Municipalities"; such the associations for the "Liberty of the Press," for "Individual Liberty," for the "Instruction of the People," and against "Indirect Taxes." Next we have the "Society of Equalitarian Workmen" divided into three fractions—the Equalitarians, the Communists, and the Reformers. Then, again, the "Army of the Bastilles," a cohort possessing military organisation, four men being commanded by a corporal, ten by a sergeant, twenty by a sub-lieutenant, and forty by a lieutenant; there were never more than five men who knew each other. This is a creation which is boldly combined, and seems to be marked with the genius of Venice. The central committee which formed the head had two arms—the Society of Action and the Army of the Bastilles. A legitimist association, the "Knights of Fidelity," agitated among these republican affiliations, but was denounced and repudiated. The Parisian societies ramified through the principal cities; Lyons, Nantes, Lille had their Society of the Rights of Man, The Charbonnière, and the Free Men. Aix had a revolutionary society called the Cougourde. We have already mentioned that name.

At Paris the Faubourg St. Marceau buzzed no less than the



Faubourg St. Antoine, and the schools were quite as excited as the faubourgs. A coffee-shop in the Rue Saint Hyacinthe, and the Estaminet des Sept Billiards in the Rue des Mathurins St. Jacques, served as the gathering-place for the students. The Society of the Friends of the A B C affiliated with the Mutualists of Angers, and the Cougourde of Aix assembled, as we have seen, at the Café Musain. The same young men met, as we have also said, at a wine-shop and eating-house near the Rue Mondetour, called Corinthe. These meetings were secret, but others were as public as possible, and we may judge of their boldness by this fragment from an examination that was held in one of the ulterior trials. "Where was the meeting held?" "In the Rue de la Paix." "At whose house?" "In the street." "What sections were there?" "Only one." "Which one?" "The Manuel section." "Who was the chief?" "Myself." "You are too young to have yourself formed this serious resolve of attacking the Government. Whence came your instructions?" "From the central committee." The army was undermined at the same time as the population, as was proved at a later date by the movements of Belfort, Luneville, and Epinal. Hopes were built on the 52nd, 5th, 8th, and 37th Regiments, and on the 20th Light Infantry. In Burgundy and the southern towns the tree of liberty was planted, that is to say, a mast surmounted by a red cap. Such was the situation. It was rendered more sensible and marked by the Faubourg St. Antoine than by any other group of the population. This old faubourg, peopled like an ant-heap, laborious, courageous, and passionate as a hive of bees, quivered in expectation and the desire of a commotion. All was agitation there, but labour was not suspended on that account.

## CHAPTER LXXXI.

MARIUS witnessed the unexpected denouement of the snare upon the track of which he had placed Javert, but the Inspector had scarce left the house, taking his prisoners with him in three hackney-coaches, ere Marius stepped out of the house in his turn. It was only nine in the evening, and Marius went to call on Courfeyrac, who was no longer the imperturbable inhabitant of the Pays Latin. He had gone to live in the Rue de la Verrière, "for political reasons," and



this district was one of those in which insurrectionists of the day were fond of installing themselves. Marius said to Courfeyrac, "I am going to sleep here," and Courfeyrac pulled off one of his two mattresses, laid it on the ground, and said, "There you are!" At seven o'clock the next morning Marius returned to No. 50-52, paid his quarter's rent, and what he owed to Ma'am Bougon, had his books, bed, table, bureau, and two chairs, placed on a truck, and went away, without leaving his address. When Javert returned in the morning to question Marius about the events of the previous evening, he only found Ma'am Bougon, who said to him,—"Gone away." Ma'am Bougon was convinced that Marius was in some way an accomplice of the robbers arrested the previous evening. "Who would have thought it!" she exclaimed to the portresses of the quarter, "a young man whom you might have taken for a girl!"

Marius had two reasons for moving so promptly, the first was that he now felt a horror of this house, in which he had seen so closely, and in all its most repulsive and ferocious development, a social ugliness more frightful still, perhaps, than the wicked rich man—the wicked poor man. The second was that he did not wish to figure at the trial, which would in all probability ensue, and be obliged to give evidence against Thénardier. Javert believed that the young man, whose name he forgot, had been frightened and had run away, or else had not even returned home; he made some efforts, however, to find him, which were unsuccessful. A month elapsed, then another. Marius was still living with Courfeyrac, and had learned from a young barrister, an habitual walker of the *Salle des pas Perdus*, that Thénardier was in solitary confinement, and every Monday he left a five-franc piece for him at the wicket of La Force. Marius, having no money left, borrowed the five francs of Courfeyrac; it was the first time in his life that he borrowed money. These periodical five francs were a double enigma for Courfeyrac who gave them, and for Thénardier who received them. "Where can they go to?" Courfeyrac thought. "Where can they come from?" Thénardier asked himself.

Marius, however, was heart-broken, for everything had disappeared again under a trap-door. He saw nothing ahead of him, and his life was once more plunged into the mystery in which he had been groping. He had seen again



momentarily and very closely the girl whom he loved, the old man who appeared her father, the strange beings who were his only interest and sole hope in this world, and at the moment when he fancied that he should grasp them, a breath had carried off all these shadows. Not a spark of certainty and truth had flashed even from that most terrific collision, and no conjecture was possible. He no longer knew the name of which he had felt so certain, and it certainly was not Ursule, and the Lark was a nickname. And then, what must he think of the old man? Did he really hide himself from the police? The white-haired workman whom Marius had met in the vicinity of the Invalides reverted to his mind, and it now became probable that this workman and M. Leblanc were one and the same. He disguised himself then, and this man had his heroic side and his equivocal side. Why did he not call for help? why did he fly? was he, yes or no, the father of the girl? and, lastly, was he really the man whom Thénardier fancied he recognised? Thénardier might have been mistaken. These were all so many insoluble problems. All this, it is true, in no way lessened the angelic charm of the maiden of the Luxembourg, and hence arose the poignant distress. Marius had a passion in his heart, and night over his eyes. He was impelled, he was attracted, and he could not stir; all had vanished, except love, and he had lost the sudden instincts and illuminations of even that love. All his life was now summed up in two words—absolute uncertainty, in an impenetrable fog,—and though he still longed to see her, he no longer hoped it. As a climax, want returned, and he felt its icy breath close to him and behind him. In all these torments, and for a long time, he had discontinued his work, and nothing is more dangerous than discontinued work, for it is a habit which a man loses—a habit easy to give up, but difficult to reacquire.

A certain amount of reverie is good, like a narcotic taken in discreet doses. It lulls to sleep the at times harsh fevers of the working brain, and produces in the mind a soft and fresh vapour which corrects the too sharp outlines of pure thought, fills up gaps and spaces here and there, and rounds the angles of ideas. But excess of reverie submerges and drowns, and woe to the mental workman who allows himself to fall entirely from thinking into reverie! he believes that he can easily rise again, and says that, after all, it is the same thing, but it is an error! Through



going out to dream, a day arrives when a man goes out to throw himself into the water. Marius went down this incline slowly, with his eyes fixed upon her whom he no longer saw. She was Marius' entire thought, he dreamed of nothing else. He felt confusedly that his old coat was becoming an impossible coat, and that his new coat was growing an old coat, that his boots were wearing out, that his hat was wearing out, that his shirts were wearing out, that is to say, that his life was wearing out; and he said to himself, Could I but see her again before I die!

One sole sweet idea was left him, and it was that she had loved him, that her glance had told him so, and that she did not know his name, but that she knew his soul, and that however mysterious the spot might be where she now was, she loved him still. Might she not be dreaming of him as he was dreaming of her? At times in those inexplicable hours which every loving heart knows, as he had only reason to be sad, and yet felt within him a certain quivering of joy, he said to himself, "Her thoughts are visiting me," and then added, "Perhaps my thoughts also go to her." This illusion, at which he shook his head a moment after, sometimes, however, contrived to cast rays which resembled hope into his soul at intervals. Now and then, especially at that evening hour which most saddens dreamers, he poured out upon virgin paper the pure, impersonal, and ideal reveries with which love filled his brain. He called this "writing to her." We must not suppose, however, that his reason was in disorder, quite the contrary. He had lost the faculty of working and going firmly toward a determined object, but he retained clear-sightedness and rectitude more fully than ever. Marius saw by a calm and real, though singular, light, all that was taking place before him, even the most indifferent men and facts, and spoke correctly of everything with a sort of honest weariness and candid disinterestedness. Happy, even in agony, is the man to whom God has granted a soul worthy of love and misfortune! He who has not seen the things of this world and the heart of man in this double light, has seen nothing of the truth, and knows nothing, for the soul that loves and suffers is in a sublime state. Days succeeded each other, and nothing new occurred; it really seemed to him that the gloomy space which he still had to traverse was becoming daily reduced. He fancied that he could already see distinctly the brink of the bottomless abyss.



"What!" he repeated to himself, "shall I not see her again before that takes place?"

After going up the Rue St. Jacques, leaving the *barrière* on one side, and following for some distance the old inner boulevard, you reach the Rue de la Santé, then the Glacière, and just before coming to the small stream of the Gobelins, you notice a sort of field, the only spot on the long and monotonous belt of Parisian boulevards, where Ruysdael would be tempted to sit down. As the place is worth seeing, no one goes to it: scarce a cart or a wagon passes in a quarter of an hour. It once happened that Marius' solitary rambles led him to this field, and on that day there was a rarity on the boulevard, a passer-by. Marius, really struck by the almost savage grace of the field, asked him,—“What is the name of this spot?”

The passer-by answered, “It is the Lark's field;” and added, “It was here that Ulback killed the shepherdess of Ivry.”

But, after the words “the Lark,” Marius heard no more, for a word at times suffices to produce a congelation in a man's dreamy condition: the whole thought is condensed round an idea, and is no longer capable of any other perception. The Lark, that was the appellation which had taken the place of Ursule in the depths of Marius' melancholy. “Stay,” he said, with that sort of unreasoning stupor peculiar to such mysterious asides, “this is her field, I shall learn here where she lives.” This was absurd but irresistible, and he came daily to this Lark's field.

## CHAPTER LXXXII.

JAVERT'S triumph at the Maison Gorbeau had seemed complete, but was not so. In the first place, and that was his chief anxiety, Javert had not been able to make a prisoner of the prisoner: the victim who escapes is more suspicious than the assassin, and it was probable that this man who escaped, though a precious capture for the bandits, might be equally so for the authorities. Next, Montparnasse slipped out of Javert's clutches, and he must wait for another opportunity to lay hands on that “cursed little fop.” Montparnasse, in fact, having met Eponine on the boulevard, keeping watch,

went off with her; and it was lucky for him that he did so, as he was now free. As for Eponine, Javert "nailed" her, but it was a poor consolation, and sent her to join Azelma at Les Madelonnettes. Lastly, in the drive from No. 50-52 to La Force, one of the chief men arrested, Claquesous, had disappeared. No one knew how he did it, and the sergeants and agents did not at all understand it: he had turned into vapour, slipped through the handcuffs, and passed through a crack in the coach; but no one could say anything except that on reaching the prison there was no Claquesous. There was in this either enchantment or a police trick. Had Claquesous melted away in the darkness like a snow-flake in the water? was there an unavowed connivance on the part of the agents? did this man belong to the double enigma of disorder and order? Javert did not accept these combinations, and struggled against such compromises; but his squad contained other inspectors besides himself, more thoroughly initiated, perhaps, though his subordinates in the secrets of the Prefecture; and Claquesous was such a villain that he might be a very excellent agent. To be on such intimate relations with the night is capital for brigands and admirable for the police, and there are double-edged rogues of this sort. However this might be, Claquesous was lost and could not be found, and Javert seemed more irritated than surprised. As for Marius, "that scrub of a barrister who was probably frightened," and whose name he had forgotten, Javert did not trouble himself much about him, and, besides, a barrister can always be found. But, was he only a barrister?

The examination began, and the magistrate thought it advisable not to put one of the members of the Patron Minette in solitary confinement, as it was hoped he might chatter. This was Brujon, the hairy man of the Rue du Petit Banquier; he was turned into the Charlemagne Court, and the eyes of the spies were kept upon him. This name of Brujon is one of the recollections of La Force. In the hideous yard called the New Building—which the governor named the Court of St. Bernard, and the robbers christened the Lion's den, and on the wall covered with scars and leprosy, that rose on the left to the height of the roof and close to a rusty old iron gate which led to the old chapel of the Hôtel de la Force, converted into a dormitory for prisoners—there might have been seen, twelve years ago



a species of Bastille, clumsily engraved with a nail in the stone, and beneath it this signature—

BRUJON, 1811.

The Brujon of 1811 was the father of the Brujon of 1832. The latter, of whom we could only catch a glimpse in the garret, was a very crafty and artful young fellow, with a downcast and plaintive air. It was in consequence of this air that the magistrate turned him loose, believing him more useful in the Charlemagne yard than in a secret cell. Robbers do not interrupt their labours because they are in the hands of justice, and do not trouble themselves about such a trifle. Being in prison for one crime does not prevent another being commenced. There are artists who have a picture in the Exhibition, but for all that work at a new one in their studio. Brujon seemed stupefied by prison; he might be seen standing for hours in the yard near the canteen man's stall, gazing like an idiot at the duty list of prices, which began with *garlic, fifty-two centimes*, and ended with *cigar, five centimes*. Or else he passed his time in trembling, shaking his teeth, declaring he had the fever, and inquiring whether one of the twenty-six beds in the Infirmary were vacant.

All at once, toward the second half of February, 1832, it was discovered that Brujon, the sleepy-looking man, had had three messages delivered, not in his own name, but in those of his comrades, by the prison porters. These messages had cost him fifty sous altogether, an exorbitant sum, which attracted the corporal's attention. After making inquiries and consulting the tariff of messages hung up in the prisoners' visiting-room, this authority found out that the fifty sous were thus divided,—one message to the Pantheon, ten sous; one to Val de Grâce, fifteen sous; and one to the Barrière de Grenelle, twenty-five sous, the latter being the dearest in the whole list. Now at these very places resided these very dangerous prowlers at the barrière, Kruideniers, *alias* Bizarro, Glorieux an ex-convict, and Barrecarrosse, and the attention of the police was directed to these through this incident. It was assumed that these men belonged to the Patron Minette, of which band two chiefs, Babet and Gueulemer, were locked up. It was supposed that Brujon's messages, which were not delivered at the houses, but to persons waiting in the street, contained information about some meditated crime. The three ruffians



were arrested, and the police believed they had scented some machination of Brujon's.

A week after these measures had been taken, a night watchman, who was inspecting the ground-floor sleeping-ward of the New Building, saw through the trap Brujon sitting up in bed and writing something. The turnkey went in, Brujon was placed in solitary confinement for a month, but what he had written could not be found. Hence the police were just as wise as before. One thing is certain, that on the next day a "Postilion" was thrown from Charlemagne into the Lion's den over the five-storeyed building that separated the two yards. Prisoners give the name of "Postilion" to a ball of artistically moulded bread, which is sent to "Ireland," that is to say, thrown from one yard into another. This ball falls into the yard, the man who picks it up opens it and finds in it a note addressed to some prisoner in the yard. If it be a prisoner who finds the note he delivers it to the right address; if it be a turnkey, or one of those secretly-bought prisoners, called "sheep" in prisons, and "foxes" at the galleys, the note is carried to the wicket and delivered to the police. This time the postilion reached its address, although the man for whom it was intended was at the time in a separate cell. This person was no other than Babet, one of the four heads of Patron Minette. It contained a rolled-up paper, on which only two lines were written.

"Babet, there's a job to be done in the Rue Plumet, a gate opening on the garden."

It was what Brujon had written during the night. In spite of male and female searchers, Babet contrived to send the note from La Force to the Salpêtrière to a "lady friend" of his locked up there. She in her turn handed the note to a girl she knew of the name of Magnon, whom the police were actively seeking, but had not yet arrested. This Magnon was closely connected with the Thénardiens, and, by going to see Eponine, was able to serve as a bridge between the Salpêtrière and the Madelonnettes. At this very period Eponine and Azelma were discharged for want of evidence, and when Eponine went out, Magnon, who was watching for her at the gate of the Madelonnettes, handed her the note from Brujon to Babet, with instructions to look into the affair. Eponine went to the Rue Plumet, recognised the grating and the garden, observed the house, watched for some days, and then carried to Magnon a biscuit, which



the latter sent to Babet's mistress at the Salpêtrière. A biscuit, in the dark language of prisons, means, "Nothing to be done."

In less than a week from this Babet and Brujon happened to meet, as one was going before the magistrate, the other returning. "Well," Brujon asked, "the Rue P.?" "Biscuit," Babet answered. Thus the foetus of crime engendered by Brujon at La Force became abortive; but this abortion had consequences, for all that, perfectly foreign to Brujon's plans, as will be seen. In fancying we are tying one thread we often tie another.

### CHAPTER LXXXIII.

MARIUS no longer called on any one, but at times he came across Father Mabeuf. While Marius was slowly descending the mournful steps which might be called the cellar stairs, and lead to places without light, on which you hear the footsteps of the prosperous above your head, M. Mabeuf was also descending. The *Flora of Caunterets* did not sell at all now, and the indigo experiments had not been successful in the little garden of Austerlitz, which looked in a bad direction. M. Mabeuf could only cultivate in it a few rare plants which are fond of moisture and shade. For all that, though, he was not discouraged: he had obtained a strip of ground at the Jardin des Plantes, on which to carry on his experiments "at his own charge." To do this he pledged the plates of his *Flora*, and he reduced his breakfast to two eggs, of which he left one for his old servant, whose wages he had not paid for fifteen months past. And very frequently his breakfast was his sole meal. He no longer laughed with his childish laugh, he had grown morose, and declined to receive visitors, and Marius did well not to call on him. At times, at the hour when M. Mabeuf proceeded to the Jardin des Plantes, the old man and the young man passed each other on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital; they did not speak, and merely shook their heads sorrowfully. It is a sad thing that the moment arrives when misery parts friends!

Royol the publisher was dead, and now M. Mabeuf knew nothing but his books, his garden, and his indigo; these were the three shapes which happiness, pleasure, and hope had assumed for him. This fed his life; and he would say

to himself, "When I have made my blue balls, I shall be rich; I will redeem my plates from the Mont de Piété, bring my *Flora* into fashion again with charlatanism, the big drum, and advertisements in the papers, and buy, I know where, a copy of Pierre de Medine's *Art of Navigation*, with woodcuts, edition 1539." In the meanwhile, he toiled all day at his indigo patch, and at night went home to water his garden and read his books. M. Mabœuf at this period was close on eighty years of age.

One evening he had a strange apparition. He had returned home while it was still daylight, and found that Mother Plutarch, whose health was not so good as it might be, had gone to bed. He had dined upon a bone on which a little meat remained, and a lump of bread which he had found on the kitchen table, and had seated himself on a stone post which served for a bench in his garden. Near this bench there was, after the fashion of old kitchen gardens, a sort of tall building of planks in a very rickety condition, a hutch on the ground-floor, and a storeroom on the first floor. There were no rabbits in the hutch, but there were a few apples, the remnant of the winter stock, in the storeroom. M. Mabœuf was reading two books in which he took great interest. The first of these books was the celebrated treatise of President Delanere, *On the Inconstancy of Delusions*, and the other was the quarto work of Mutor de la Rubandière, *On the Demons of Vauvert and the goblins of la Bièvre*. The latter book interested him the more, because his garden had been in olden times one of the places haunted by the goblins. Twilight was beginning to whiten what is above and blacken what is below. While reading, M. Mabœuf looked over the book which he held in his hand at his plants, and among others at a magnificent rhododendron, which was one of his consolations. Four days of wind and sun had passed without a drop of rain, the stems were bending, the buds drooping, the leaves falling, and they all required watering; this rhododendron especially looked in a very sad way. M. Mabœuf was one of those men for whom plants have souls; he had been at work all day in his indigo patch, and was worn out with fatigue, but for all that he rose, laid his books on the bench, and walked in a bent posture, and with tottering steps, up to the well. But when he seized the chain he had not sufficient strength to unhook it; he then turned and took a glance of agony at the sky, which was glittering with stars. The evening had that serenity which crushes human



sorrow under a lugubrious and eternal joy. The night promised to be as dry as the day had been.

"Stars everywhere!" the old man thought, "not the smallest cloud! not a drop of water!"

And his head, which had been raised a moment before, fell again on his chest, then he looked once more at the sky, murmuring:

"A little dew! a little pity!"

He tried once again to unhook the well-chain, but could not succeed; at this moment he heard a voice saying:

"Father Mabeuf, shall I water the garden for you?"

At the same time a sound like that of a wild beast breaking through was heard in the hedge, and he saw a tall thin girl emerge, who stood before him looking at him boldly. She looked less like a human being than some form engendered of the darkness. Ere Father Mabeuf, whom, as we said, was easily terrified, found time to answer a syllable, this creature, whose movements had in the gloom a sort of strange suddenness, had unhooked the chain, let down and drawn up the bucket, and filled the watering-pot; and the old gentleman saw this apparition, which was barefooted and wore a ragged skirt, running along the flower-beds and distributing life around her. The sound of the water pattering on the leaves filled M. Mabeuf's soul with ravishment, and the rhododendron now seemed to him to be happy. The first bucket emptied, the girl drew a second, then a third, and watered the whole garden. To see her moving thus along the walks in which her outline appeared quite black, and waving on her long thin arms her ragged shawl, she bore a striking resemblance to a bat. When she had finished, Father Mabeuf went up to her with tears in his eyes, and laid his hand on her forehead.

"God will bless you," he said, "you are an angel, since you care for flowers."

"No," she replied, "I am the devil, but I don't care."

The old man continued, without waiting for or hearing the reply:

"What a pity that I am so unhappy and so poor, and can do nothing for you!"

"You can do something," she said.

"What is it?"

"Tell me where M. Marius lives."

The old man did not understand.

"What Monsieur Marius?"

He raised his glassy eyes and seemed seeking something which had vanished.

"A young man who used to come here."

"Ah, yes," he exclaimed, "I know whom you mean. Wait a minute! Monsieur Marius, Baron Marius Pontmercy, pardieu! lives, or rather he does not live—well, I do not know."

While speaking, he had stooped to straighten a rhododendron branch, and continued:

"Ay! yes, I remember now. He passes very frequently along the boulevard, and goes in the direction of the Lark's field in the Rue Croule Barbe. Look for him there, he will not be difficult to find."

When M. Maboëuf raised his head again, he was alone, and the girl had disappeared. He was decidedly a little frightened.

"Really," he thought, "if my garden were not watered, I should fancy that it was a ghost."

A few days after this visit of a ghost to Father Maboëuf—it was on a Monday, the day of the five-franc piece, which Marius borrowed of Courfeyrac for Thénardier, Marius placed the coin in his pocket, and before carrying it to the prison, resolved to "take a little walk," hoping that on his return this would make him work. It was, however, everlastingly so. As soon as he rose, he sat down before a book and paper to set about some translation, and his job at this time was the translation into French of a celebrated German quarrel, the controversy between Gans and Savigny. He took up Gans, he took up Savigny, read four pages, tried to write one but could not, saw a star between his paper and himself, and got up from his chair, saying, "I will go out, that will put me in the humour," and he proceeded to the Lark's field, where he saw the star more than ever, and Gans and Savigny less. He went home, tried to resume his task, and did not succeed; he could not join a single one of the threads broken in his brain, and so said to himself, "I will not go out to-morrow, for it prevents me from working." But he went out every day.

He lived in the Lark's field more than at Courfeyrac's lodging, and his right address was Boulevard de la Santé, at the seventh tree past the Rue Croule Barbe. On this



morning he had left the seventh tree and was seated on the parapet of the bridge over the little stream. The merry sunbeams were flashing through the expanded and luminous leaves. He thought of "Her," and his reverie, becoming a reproach, fell back on himself; he thought bitterly of the indolence and mental paralysis which were gaining on him, and of the night which constantly grew denser before him, so that he could no longer even see the sun. Still, through this painful evolution of indistinct ideas which was not even a soliloquy, as action was so weak in him, and he had no longer the strength to try and feel sad; through this melancholy absorption, we say, sensations from without reached him. He heard behind, below, and on both sides of him, the washerwomen of the Gobelins beating their linen, and above him the birds twittering and singing in the elms. On one side the sound of liberty, happy carelessness, and winged leisure, on the other the sound of labour. These two joyous sounds made him think deeply and almost reflect. All at once he heard amid his poignant ecstasy a familiar voice saying :

"Ah ! here he is !"

He raised his eyes and recognised the unhappy girl who had come to him one morning, Eponine, the elder of Thénardier's daughters; he now knew what her name was. Strange to say, she had grown poorer and more beautiful, two things which he had not thought possible. She had accomplished a double progress toward light and toward distress. Her feet were bare and her clothes torn, as on the day when she so boldly entered his room, but the rags were two months older and the holes larger. She had the same hoarse voice, the same forehead wrinkled and bronzed by exposure, the same free, absent, and wandering look, but she had, in addition, on her countenance, something startled and lamentable, which passing through prisons adds to misery. She had pieces of straw and hay in her hair, not that, like Ophelia, she had gone mad through contagion with Hamlet's lunacy, but because she had slept in some stable-loft; and with all this, she was beautiful. O youth, what a star art thou ! She had stooped in front of Marius with a little joy on her livid face, and something like a smile, and it was some minutes ere she could speak.

"I have found you !" she said at last. "Father Maboëuf was right, it was in this boulevard ! How I have sought

you, if you only knew ! Do you know that I have been in quod for a fortnight ! They let me go as there was no charge against me, and besides I had not attained years of discretion by two months. Oh, how I have looked for you the last six weeks ! So you no longer live down there ? ”

“ No,” said Marius.

“ Ah, I understand, on account of that thing ; well, such disturbances are unpleasant, and you moved. Hilloh, why do you wear an old hat like that ? a young man like you ought to be handsomely dressed. Do you know, Monsieur Marius, that M. Mabœuf calls you Baron Marius—I forget what ; but you are not a baron, are you ? Barons are old swells, who walk in front of the Luxembourg Palace, where there is the most sun, and read the *Quotidienne* for a sou. I went once with a letter for a baron who was like that ; he was more than a hundred years of age. Tell me, where do you live now ? ”

Marius did not answer.

“ Ah,” she added, “ you have a hole in your shirt-front ; I must mend it for you.”

Then she continued with an expression which gradually grew gloomier :

“ You do not seem pleased to see me ? ”

Marius held his tongue. She was also silent for a moment, and then exclaimed :

“ If I liked, I could compel you to look pleased.”

“ What do you mean ? ” Marius asked.

She bit her lip, and apparently hesitated, as if suffering from some internal struggle. At length she seemed to make up her mind.

“ All the worse ; but no matter, you look sad and I wish you to be pleased. Only promise me, though, that you will laugh, for I want to see you laugh and hear you say, ‘ Ah ! that is famous ! ’ Poor M. Marius ! you know you promised you would give me all I wanted.”

“ Yes, but speak, can’t you ? ”

She looked at M. Marius intently and said, “ I have the address.”

Marius turned pale, and all his blood flowed to his heart.

“ What address ? ”

“ The address which you asked me for ; ” and she added, as if with a great effort, “ the address—you know ? ”

“ Yes,” Marius stammered.



"The young lady's."

These words uttered, she heaved a deep sigh. Marius leapt from the parapet on which he was sitting, and wildly seized her hand.

"Oh! lead me to it! tell me! ask of me what you please! where is it?"

"Come with me," she answered; "I don't exactly know the street or the number, and it is quite on the other side of town, but I know the house well, and will take you to it."

She withdrew her hand, and continued in a tone which would have made an observer's heart bleed, but did not at all affect the intoxicated and transported lover:

"Oh, how pleased you are!"

A cloud passed over Marius' forehead, and he clutched Eponine's arm.

"Swear one thing."

"Swear?" she said, "what do you mean by that? what would you have me swear?"

And she burst into a laugh.

"Your father! promise me, Eponine, swear to me that you will never tell your father that address."

She turned to him with an air of stupefaction. "Eponine! how do you know that is my name?"

"Promise me what I ask you."

But she did not seem to hear him.

"That is nice! you call me Eponine!"

Marius seized both her arms.

"Answer me in Heaven's name! pay attention to what I am saying,—swear to me that you will not tell your father the address which you know."

"My father?" she remarked. "Oh, yes, my father. He's all right in a secret cell. Besides, what do I care for my father!"

"But you have not promised!" Marius exclaimed.

"Let me go!" she said, as she burst into a laugh, "how you are shaking me! Yes, yes, I promise it, I swear it! how does it concern me? I will not tell my father the address. There, does that suit you, is that it?"

"And no one else?" said Marius.

"And no one else."

"Now," Marius continued, "lead me there."

"At once?"

"Yes."

"Come on! Oh, how glad he is!" she said.

A few yards farther on she stopped.

"You are following me too closely, M. Marius; let me go on in front and do you follow me, as if you were not doing so. A respectable young man like you must not be seen with such a woman as I am."

No language could render all that was contained in the word "woman" thus pronounced by this child. She went a dozen paces and stopped again. Marius rejoined her, and she said to him aside without turning to him:

"By the bye, you know that you promised me something?"

Marius felt in his pocket; he had nothing in the world but the five-franc piece destined for father Thénardier, but he laid the coin in Eponine's hand. She let it slip through her fingers to the ground, and looking at him frowningly said:

"I do not want your money."

#### CHAPTER LXXXIV.

TOWARDS the middle of the last century a President of the Parliament of Paris who kept a mistress under the rose, for at that day the nobility displayed their mistresses and the bourgeois concealed theirs, had "a small house," built in the Faubourg St. Germain, in the deserted Rue de Blomet, which is now called Rue Plumet. This house consisted of a pavilion two storeys in height: two sitting-rooms on the ground-floor, two bedrooms on the first, a kitchen below, a boudoir above, an attic beneath the roof, and the whole was surrounded by a large garden with railings looking out on the street. This was all that passers-by could see. But behind the pavilion was a narrow yard, with an outhouse containing two rooms, where a nurse and a child could be concealed if necessary. In the back of this outhouse was a secret door leading into a long, paved winding passage, open to the sky, and bordered by two lofty walls. This passage, concealed with prodigious art, and, as it were, lost between the garden walls, whose every turn and winding it followed, led to another secret door, which opened about a quarter of a mile off almost in another quarter, at the solitary end of the Rue de Babylone. The President went in by this door, so that even those who might have watched him, and observed that he mysteriously went somewhere



every day, could not have suspected that going to the Rue de Babylone was going to the Rue Blomet. By clever purchases of ground, the ingenious magistrate had been enabled to make this hidden road upon his own land, and consequently without supervision. At a later date he sold the land bordering the passage in small lots for gardens, and the owners of these gardens on either side believed that they had a parting-wall before them, and did not even suspect the existence of this long strip of pavement winding between two walls among their flower-beds and orchards. The birds alone saw this curiosity, and it is probable that the linnets and tom-tits of the last century gossiped a good deal about the President.

The pavilion, built of stone, in the Mansard taste, and panelled and furnished in the Watteau style, rock-work outside, periwig within, and begirt by a triple hedge of flowers, had something discreet, coquettish, and solemn about it, befitting the caprices of love and a magistrate. This house and this passage, which have now disappeared, still existed fifteen years ago. In '93 a brazier bought the house for the purpose of demolishing it, but as he could not pay, the nation made him bankrupt, and thus it was the house that demolished the brazier. Since then the house had remained uninhabited, and fell slowly into ruin, like every residence to which the presence of man no longer communicates life. The old furniture was left in it, and the ten or twelve persons who pass along the Rue Plumet were informed that it was for sale or lease by a yellow and illegible placard which had been fastened to the garden gate since 1810. Toward the end of the Restoration the same passers-by might have noticed that the bill had disappeared, and even that the first-floor shutters were open. The house was really occupied, and there were short curtains at the windows, a sign that there was a lady in the house. In October, 1809, a middle-aged man presented himself and took the house as it stood, including of course the outhouse and the passage leading to the Rue de Babylone, and he had the two secret doors of this passage put in repair. The house was still furnished much as the President had left it, so the new tenant merely ordered a few necessary articles, had the paving of the yard put to rights, new stairs put in, and the windows mended, and eventually installed himself there with a young girl and an old woman, without any disturbance, and rather like a man



slipping in than one entering his own house. The neighbours, however, did not chatter, for the simple reason that there were none.

The tenant was in reality Jean Valjean, and the girl was Cosette. The domestic was a female of the name of Toussaint, whom Jean Valjean had saved from the hospital and wretchedness, and who was old, rustic, and stammered, three qualities which determined Jean Valjean on taking her with him. He hired the house in the name of M. Fauchelevent, annuitant. In all we have recently recorded the reader will have doubtless recognised Valjean even sooner than Thénardier did. Why had he left the convent of the Little Picpus, and what had occurred there? Nothing had occurred. It will be borne in mind that Jean Valjean was happy in the convent, so happy that his conscience at last became disturbed by it. He saw Cosette daily, he felt paternity springing up and being developed in him more and more; he set his whole soul on the girl; he said to himself that she was his, that no power on earth could rob him of her, that it would be so indefinitely, that she would certainly become a nun, as she was daily gently urged to it, that henceforth the convent was the world for him as for her, that he would grow old in it and she grow up, that she would grow old and he die there; and that, finally, no separation was possible. While reflecting on this, he began falling into perplexities: he asked himself if all this happiness were really his, if it were not composed of the happiness of this child, which he confiscated and deprived her of, and whether this were not a robbery? He said to himself that this child had the right to know life before renouncing it, that depriving her beforehand, and without consulting her, of all joys under the pretext of saving her from all trials, and profiting by her ignorance and isolation to make an artificial vocation spring up in her, was denaturalising a human creature and being false to God. And who knew whether Cosette, some day meditating on this, and feeling herself a reluctant nun, might not grow to hate him? It was a last thought, almost selfish and less heroic than the others, but it was insupportable to him. He resolved to leave the convent.

He resolved, and recognised with a breaking heart that he must do so. As for objections, there were none, for six years of residence between these walls, and of disappearance, had necessarily destroyed or dispersed the element of fear.



He could return to human society at his ease, for he had grown old and all had changed. Who would recognise him now? And then, looking at the worst, there was only danger for himself, and he had not the right to condemn Cosette to a cloister, for the reason that he had been condemned to the galleys; besides, what is danger in the presence of duty? Lastly, nothing prevented him from being prudent and taking precautions; and as for Cosette's education, it was almost completed and terminated. Once the resolution was formed, he awaited the opportunity, which soon offered: old Fauchelevent died. Jean Valjean requested an audience of the reverend Prioress, and told her that as he had inherited a small property by his brother's death, which would enable him to live without working, he was going to leave the convent, and take his daughter with him; but as it was not fair that Cosette, who was not going to profess, should have been educated gratuitously, he implored the reverend Prioress to allow him to offer the community, for the five years which Cosette had passed among them, the sum of five thousand francs. It was thus that Jean Valjean quitted the convent of the Perpetual Adoration.

On leaving it he carried with his own hands, and would not entrust to any porter, the small valise, of which he always had the key about him. This valise perplexed Cosette, owing to the aromatic smell which issued from it. Let us say at once that this trunk never quitted him again, he always had it in his bedroom, and it was the first, and at times the only thing which he carried away in his removals. Cosette laughed, called this valise the inseparable, and said, "I am jealous of it." Jean Valjean, however, felt a profound anxiety when he returned to the outer air. He discovered the house in the Rue Plumet, and hid himself in it, henceforth remaining in possession of the name of Ultime Fauchelevent. At the same time he hired two other lodgings in Paris, so that he might attract less attention than if he had always remained in the same quarter; that he might, if necessary, absent himself for a while if anything alarmed him; and, lastly, that he might not be taken unawares, as on the night when he so miraculously escaped from Javert. These two lodgings were of a very mean appearance, and in two quarters very distant from each other, one being in the Rue de l'Ouest, the other in the Rue de l'Homme-armé. He spent a few weeks now and then at one or the other of these lodgings, taking Cosette with him



and leaving Toussaint behind. He was waited on by the porters, and represented himself as a person living in the country, who had a lodging in town. This lofty virtue had three domiciles in Paris in order to escape the police.

Properly speaking, however, Jean Valjean's house was at the Rue Plumet, and he had arranged his existence there in the following fashion :—Cosette and the servant occupied the pavilion : she had the best bedroom, with the painted press, the boudoir with the gilt beading, the President's drawing-room with its hangings and vast easy-chairs, and the garden. Jean Valjean placed in Cosette's room a bed with a canopy of old damask in three colours, and an old and handsome Persian carpet, purchased at Mother Gauchér's in the Rue Figuier Saint Paul, while, to correct the sternness of these old splendours, he added all the light gay furniture of girls, an étagère, bookshelves with gilt books, a desk and blotting-case, a work-table inlaid with mother-of-pearl, a silver dressing-case, and toilette articles of Japanese china. Long damask curtains of three colours, like those on the bed, festooned the first-floor windows, while on the ground-floor they were of tapestry. All through the winter Cosette's small house was warmed from top to bottom. While Valjean himself lived in the sort of porter's lodge at the end of the back-yard, which was furnished with a mattress and common bedstead, a deal table, two straw-bottomed chairs, an earthenware water-jug, a few books on a plank, and his dear valise in a corner, but he never had any fire. He dined with Cosette, and black bread was put on the table for him ; and he had said to Toussaint, when she came, " This young lady is mistress of the house." " And you, sir ? " Toussaint replied, quite stupefied. " Oh ! I am much better than the master,—I am the father."

Cosette had been taught housekeeping in the convent, and checked the expenses, which were very small. Daily Jean Valjean took Cosette for a walk, leading to the most sequestered allée of the Luxembourg, and every Sunday they attended mass at the Church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas, because it was a long distance off. As it is a very poor district, he gave away a considerable amount of alms, and the wretched flocked around him in the church, which caused Thénardier to head his letter to him in the way we have seen. He was fond of taking Cosette to visit the indigent and the sick, but no stranger ever entered the house in the Rue Plumet. Toussaint bought the provisions, and



Jean Valjean himself fetched the water from a fountain close by, on the boulevard. The wood and wine were kept in a semi-subterranean building covered with rock-work, near the door in the Rue Babylone, and which had formerly served the President as a grotto, for in the age of the Follies and small houses, love was not possible without a grotto. In the door opening on the Rue Babylone there was a letter-box, but, as the inhabitants of the house in the Rue Plumet received no letters, this box, once on a time the go-between in amourettes, and the confidant of a love-sick lawyer, was now only of service to receive the tax-papers and the guard-summonses. For M. Fauchelevent, annuitant, belonged to the National Guard, and had been unable to escape the close meshes of the census of 1831. The municipal inquiries made at that period extended even to the convent of the Little Picpus, whence Jean Valjean emerged venerable in the sight of the Major, and consequently worthy of mounting guard. Three or four times a year Jean Valjean donned his uniform and went on duty, and did so readily enough, for it was a disguise which enabled him to mix with everybody, while himself remaining solitary. Jean Valjean had attained his sixtieth year, or the age of legal exemption; but he did not look more than fifty; besides, he had no wish to escape his Sergeant-major and cheat Count Lobau. He had no civil status, hid his name, his identity, his age, everything, and, as we just said, he was a willing National Guard; all his ambition was to resemble the first-comer who pays taxes. The ideal of this man was internally an angel, externally a bourgeois.

Let us mention one fact, by the way. When Jean Valjean went out with Cosette he dressed himself in the way we have seen, and looked like a retired officer, but when he went out alone, and he did so usually at night, he was attired in a workman's jacket and trousers, and a cap whose peak was pulled deep over his eyes. Was this precaution or humility? Both at once. Cosette was accustomed to the enigmatical side of her destiny, and hardly noticed her father's singularities; as for Toussaint, she revered Jean Valjean, and considered everything he did right. One day her butcher, who got a glimpse of her master, said, "He's a queer-looking stick," and she replied, "He's a—a—a—saint." All three never left the house except by the gate in the Rue de Babylone; and unless they were noticed through the garden gate it would



be difficult to guess that they lived in the Rue Plumet. This gate was always locked, and Jean Valjean left the garden untended that it might not be noticed. In this, perhaps, he deceived himself.

This garden, left to itself for more than half a century, had become extraordinary and charming: passers-by forty years ago stopped in the street to gaze at it, without suspecting the secrets which it hid behind its fresh green screen. More than one dreamer at that day allowed his eyes and thoughts indiscreetly to penetrate the bars of the old locked, twisted, shaky gate, which hung from two mould-covered pillars and was surmounted by a pediment covered with undecipherable arabesques. There was a stone bank in a corner, there were one or two mouldering statues, and some trellis-work, unnailed by time, was rotting against the walls; there was no turf or walk left, but there was dog's-grass everywhere. The artificiality of gardening had departed, and nature had returned; weeds were abundant, and the festival of the gilly-flowers was splendid there. Nothing in this garden impeded the sacred efforts of things toward life, and growth was at home there, and held high holiday. The trees had bent down to the briars, the briars had mounted towards the trees; the plants had clambered up, the branches had bent down. What crawls on the ground had gone to meet what expands in the air, and what floats in the wind stooped down to what drags along the moss; brambles, branches, leaves, fibres, tufts, twigs, tendrils, and thorns were mixed together, wedded and confounded; vegetation had celebrated and accomplished here, in a close and profound embrace, and beneath the satisfied eye of the Creator, the holy mystery of its fraternity, which is a symbol of human paternity.

Although the pavement of Paris was all around, the classical and splendid mansions of the Rue de Varennes two yards off, the dome of the Invalides close by, and the Chamber of Deputies no great distance; although the carriages from the Rues de Bourgogne and St. Dominique rolled along luxuriously in the vicinity, and yellow, brown, and white, and red omnibuses crossed the adjoining square, the Rue Plumet was a desert; and the death of the old proprietors, a revolution which had passed, the overthrow of old fortunes, absence, forgetfulness, and forty years of desertion and widowhood, had sufficed to bring back to this privileged spot ferns, torch-weeds,



hemlock, ragwort, tall grass, dock-leaves, lizards, beetles, and restless and rapid insects.

It seemed as if this garden, created in former times to conceal libertine mysteries, had been transformed and become fitting to shelter chaste mysteries. There were no longer any cradles, bowling-greens, covered walks, or grottos; but there was a magnificent tangled obscurity which fell all around, and Paphos was changed into Eden. A penitent feeling had refreshed this retreat, and the coquettish garden, once on a time so compromised, had returned to virginity and modesty. A president assisted by a gardener, a good fellow who believed himself the successor of Lamoignon, and another good fellow who fancied himself the successor of Lenôtre, had turned it about, clipped it, and prepared it for purposes of gallantry; but nature had seized it again, filled it with shadow, and prepared it for love. There was too in this solitude a heart which was quite ready, and love had only to show itself; for there were here a temple composed of verdure, grass, moss, the sighs of birds, gentle shadows, waving branches, and a soul formed of gentleness, faith, candour, hope, aspirations, and illusions.

Cosette left the convent while still almost a child. She was but little more than fourteen, and at the "ungrateful age," as we have said. With the exception of her eyes, she seemed rather ugly than pretty; still she had no ungraceful feature, but she was awkward, thin, timid and bold at the same time, in short, a grown-up little girl. Her education was finished, that is to say, she had been taught religion, and more especially devotion, also "history," that is to say, the thing so called in a convent; geography, grammar, the participles, the kings of France, and a little music, drawing, etc.; but in other respects she was ignorant of everything, which is at once a charm and a peril. The mind of a young girl ought not to be left in darkness, for at a later date too sudden and quick looming as produced in it as in a *camera obscura*. She should be gently and discreetly enlightened, rather by the reflection of realities than by their direct and harsh light; for this is a useful and gracefully obscure semi-light which dissipates childish fears and prevents falls. There is only the maternal instinct, that admirable intuition into which the recollections of the virgin and the experience of the wife enter, that knows how or of what this semi-light should be



composed. Nothing can take the place of this instinct, and in forming a girl's mind, all the nuns in the world are not equal to one mother. Cosette had had no mother, she had only had a great many mothers: as for Jean Valjean, he had within him every possible tenderness and every possible anxiety; but he was only an old man who knew nothing at all. Now, in this work of education, in this serious matter of preparing a woman for life, what knowledge is needed to contend against the other great ignorance which is called innocence! Nothing prepares a girl for passions like the convent, for it directs her thoughts to the unknown. The heart is driven back on itself, and hence come visions, suppositions, conjectures, romances sketched, adventures longed for, fantastic constructions, and edifices built entirely on the inner darkness of the mind, gloomy and secret dwellings in which the passions alone find a lodging so soon as passing through the convent gate allows it. The convent is a compression which must last the whole life, if it is to triumph over the human heart. On leaving the convent, Cosette could not have found anything sweeter or more dangerous than the house in the Rue Plumet. It was the commencement of solitude with the commencement of liberty, a closed garden, but a rich, sharp, voluptuous, and flagrant soul; there were the same dreams as in the convent, but glimpses could be caught of young men,—it was a grating, but it looked on the street. Still, we repeat, when Cosette first came here, she was but a child. Jean Valjean gave over to her this uncultivated garden, and said to her, "Do what you like with it." This amused Cosette, she moved all the tufts and all the stones in search of "beasts"; she played about while waiting till the time came to think, and she loved this garden for the sake of the insects which she found in the grass under her feet, while waiting till she should love it for the sake of the stars she could see through the branches above her head.

And then, too, she loved her father, that is to say, Jean Valjean, with all her soul, with a simple filial passion, which rendered the worthy man a desired and delightful companion to her. Our readers will remember that M. Madeleine was fond of reading, and Jean Valjean continued in the same track; he had learned to speak well, and he possessed the secret wealth and the eloquence of a humble, true, and self-cultivated intellect. He had retained just



sufficient roughness to season his kindness, and he had a rough mind and a soft heart. During their *tête-à-têtes* in the Luxembourg garden he gave her long explanations about all sorts of things, deriving his information from what he had read, and also from what he had suffered. While Cosette was listening to him her eyes vaguely wandered around. This simple man was sufficient for Cosette's thoughts, in the same way as the wild garden was for her eyes. When she had chased the butterflies for a while she would run up to him panting, and say, "Oh! how tired I am!" and he would kiss her forehead. Cosette adored this good man, and she was ever at his heels, for wherever Jean Valjean was, happiness was. As he did not live either in the pavilion or the garden, she was more attached to the paved back-yard than to the flower-laden garden, and preferred the little outhouse with the straw chairs to the large drawing-room hung with tapestry, along which silk-covered chairs were arranged. Jean Valjean at times said to her with a smile of a man who is delighted to be annoyed,—“Come, go to your own rooms! leave me at peace for a little while.”

She scolded him in that charming tender way which is so graceful when addressed by a daughter to a parent.

“Father, I feel very cold in your room; why don't you have a carpet and a stove!”

“My dear child, there are so many persons more deserving than myself who have not even a roof to cover them.”

“Then, why is there fire in my room and everything that I want?”

“Because you are a woman and a child.”

“Nonsense! then men must be cold and hungry?”

“Some men.”

“Very good! I'll come here so often that you will be obliged to have a fire.”

Or else it was:

“Father, why do you eat such wretched bread as that?”

“Because I do, my daughter.”

“Well, if you eat it I shall eat it too.”

And so to prevent Cosette from eating black bread Jean Valjean ate white. Cosette remembered her childhood but confusedly, and she prayed night and morning for the mother whom she had never known. The Thénardiens were like two hideous beings seen in a dream, and she merely remembered that she had gone “one day at night”

to fetch water in a wood—she thought that it was a long distance from Paris. It seemed to her as if she had commenced life in an abyss, and that Jean Valjean had drawn her out of it, and her childhood produced on her the effect of a time when she had had nought but centipedes, spiders, and snakes around her. When she thought at night before she fell asleep, as she had no very clear idea of being Jean Valjean's daughter, she imagined that her mother's soul had passed into this good man, and had come to dwell near her. When he was sitting down she rested her cheek on his white hair, and silently dropped a tear, while saying to herself, "Perhaps this man is my mother!" Cosette, strange though it is to say, in her profound ignorance, as a girl educated in a convent, and as, too, maternity is absolutely unintelligible to virginity, eventually imagined that she had had as little of a mother as was possible. This mother's name she did not know, and whenever it happened that she spoke to Jean Valjean on the subject he held his tongue. If she repeated her question he answered by a smile, and once, when she pressed him, the smile terminated in a tear. This silence on his part cast a night over Fantine: was it through prudence? was it through respect? or was it through a fear of entrusting this name to the chances of another memory besides his own?

So long as Cosette was young, Jean Valjean readily talked to her about her mother, but when she grew up it was impossible for him to do so—he felt as if he dared not do it. Was it on account of Cosette or of Fantine? He felt a species of religious horror at making this shadow enter Cosette's thoughts, and rendering a dead woman a third person in their society. The more sacred this shade was to him, the more formidable was it. He thought of Fantine, and felt himself overwhelmed by the silence. He saw vaguely in the darkness something that resembled a finger laid on a lip. Had all the modesty which was in Fantine, and which, during her existence, came out of her violently, returned after her death, to watch indignantly over the dead woman's peace, and sternly guard her in the tomb? was Jean Valjean himself unconsciously oppressed by it? We who believe in death are not prepared to reject this mysterious explanation, and hence arose the impossibility of pronouncing, even to Cosette, the name of Fantine. One day Cosette said to him :



"Father, I saw my mother last night in a dream. She had two large wings, and in life she must have been a sainted woman."

"Through martyrdom," Jean Valjean replied. Altogether, though, he was happy; when Cosette went out with him she leant on his arm, proudly and happily, in the fulness of her heart. Jean Valjean felt his thoughts melt into delight at all these marks of such exclusive tenderness, so satisfied with himself alone. The poor wretch inundated with an angelic joy, trembled; he assured himself with transports that this would last his whole life; he said to himself that he had not really suffered enough to deserve such radiant happiness, and he thanked God, in the depths of his soul, for having allowed him, villain as he was, to be thus loved by an innocent being.

## CHAPTER LXXXV.

ONE day Cosette happened to look at herself in the glass, and said, "Good gracious!" She fancied that she was almost pretty, and this threw her into a singular trouble. Up to this moment she had not thought of her face, and though she saw herself in the mirror she did not look at herself. And, then, she had often been told that she was ugly; Jean Valjean alone would say gently, "Oh no, oh no!" However this might be, Cosette had always believed herself ugly, and had grown up in this idea with the facile resignation of childhood. And now all at once her looking-glass said to her, as Jean Valjean had done, "Oh no!" She did not sleep that night. "Suppose I were pretty," she thought, "how droll it would be if I were pretty!" and she remembered those of her companions whose beauty produced an effect in the convent, and said to herself, "What! I might be like Mademoiselle So-and-so!"

On the next day she looked at herself, but not accidentally, and doubted. "Where was my sense?" she said, "no, I am ugly." She had simply slept badly, her eyes were heavy and her cheeks pale. She had not felt very joyous on the previous day when she fancied herself pretty, but was sad at no longer believing it. She did not look at herself again, and for upwards of a fortnight tried to dress her hair with her back to the glass. In the evening, after dinner, she usually worked at her embroidery in the drawing-



room, while Jean Valjean read by her side. Once she raised her eyes from her work, and was greatly surprised by the anxious way in which her father was gazing at her. Another time she was walking along the street, and fancied she heard some one behind her, whom she did not see, say, "A pretty woman, but badly dressed." "Nonsense," she thought, "it is not I, for I am well dressed and ugly." At that time she wore her plush bonnet and merino dress. One day, at last, she was in the garden, and heard poor old Toussaint saying, "Master, do you notice how pretty our young lady is growing?" Cosette did not hear her father's answer, for Toussaint's words produced a sort of commotion in her. She ran out of the garden up to her room, looked in the glass, which she had not done for three months, and uttered a cry—she had dazzled herself.

She was beautiful and pretty, and could not refrain from being of the same opinion as Toussaint and her glass. Her waist was formed, her skin had grown white, her hair was glossy, and an unknown splendour was lit up in her blue eyes. The consciousness of her beauty came to her fully in a minute, like the sudden dawn of day; others, besides, noticed her, Toussaint said so; it was evidently to herself that the passer-by alluded, and no doubt was possible. She returned to the garden, believing herself a queen, hearing the birds sing, though it was winter, seeing the golden sky, the sun amid the trees, flowers on the shrubs; she was wild, distraught, and in a state of ineffable ravishment. On his side, Jean Valjean experienced a profound and inexplicable contraction of the heart; for some time past, in truth, he had contemplated with terror the beauty which daily appeared more radiant in Cosette's sweet face. It was a laughing dawn for all, but most mournful for him.

Cosette had been for a long time beautiful ere she perceived the fact, but, from the first day, this unexpected light which slowly rose and gradually enveloped the girl's entire person hurt Jean Valjean's sombre eyes. He felt that it was a change in a happy life, so happy that he did not dare stir in it, for fear of deranging it somewhere. This man, who had passed through every possible distress, who was still bleeding from the wounds dealt him by his destiny, who had been almost wicked, and had become almost a saint, who, after dragging the galley chain, was now dragging the invisible but weighty chain of indefinite infamy; this man whom the law had not liberated, and who might at



any moment be recaptured and taken from the obscurity of virtue to the broad daylight of further opprobrium—this man accepted everything, excused everything, pardoned everything, blessed everything, wished everything well, and only asked one thing of Providence, of men, of the laws, of society, of nature, of the world—that Cosette should love him, that Cosette might continue to love him! that God would not prevent the heart of this child turning to him and remaining with him! Loved by Cosette, he felt cured, at rest, appeased, overwhelmed, rewarded, and crowned. With Cosette's love all was well, and he asked no more. Had any one said to him, "Would you like to be better off?" he would have answered, "No." Had God said to him, "Do you wish for heaven?" he would have answered, "I should lose by it." All that could affect this situation, even on the surface, appeared to him the beginning of something else. He had never known thoroughly what a woman's beauty was, but he understood instinctively that it was terrible. This beauty, which continually expanded more triumphantly and superbly by his side, upon the ingenuous and formidable brow of the child, from the depths of his ugliness, old age, misery, reprobation, and despondency, terrified him, and he said to himself, "How beautiful she is! what will become of me?" Here lay the difference between his tenderness and that of a mother; what he saw with agony a mother would have seen with joy.

The first symptoms speedily manifested themselves. From the day when Cosette said to herself, "I am decidedly good-looking," she paid attention to her toilet. She remembered the remark of the passer-by—pretty, but badly dressed—a blast of the oracle which passed by her and died out, after depositing in her heart one of those two germs which are destined at a later period to occupy a woman's entire life—coquettishness. The other is love. With faith in her beauty, all her feminine soul was expanded within her; she had a horror of merinos, and felt ashamed of plush. Her father never refused her anything, and she knew at once the whole science of the hat, the dress, the mantle, the slipper, and the sleeve of the fabric that suits, and the colour that is becoming, the science which makes the Parisian woman something so charming, profound, and dangerous. The expression *femme capiteuse* was invented for the Parisian. In less than a month little Cosette was in this Thebais of the Rue de Babylone, not only one



of the prettiest women, which is something, but one of the best dressed in Paris, which is a great deal more. She would have liked to meet her "passer-by," to see what he would say, and teach him a lesson. The fact is, that she was in every respect ravishing, and could admirably distinguish a bonnet of Gerard's from one of Herbautt's. Jean Valjean regarded these ravages with anxiety, and while feeling that he could never do more than crawl or walk at the most, he could see Cosette's wings growing. However, by the simple inspection of Cosette's toilet, a woman would have seen that she had no mother. Certain small proprieties and social conventionalisms were not observed by Cosette; a mother, for instance, would have told her that an unmarried girl does not wear brocade.

The first day that Cosette went out in her dress and cloak of black brocade, and her white crape bonnet, she took Jean Valjean's arm, gay, radiant, blushing, proud, and striking. "Father," she said, "how do you think I look?" Jean Valjean replied, in a voice which resembled the bitter voice of an envier, "Charming." During the walk he was as usual, but when he returned home he asked Cosette:

"Will you not put on that dress and bonnet, you know which, again?"

This took place in Cosette's room; she returned to the wardrobe in which her boarding-school dress was hanging.

"That disguise?" she said, "how can you expect it, father? oh, no, indeed, I shall never put on those horrors again: with that thing on my head I look a regular dowdy."

Jean Valjean heaved a deep sigh.

From that moment he noticed that Cosette, who hitherto had wished to stay at home, saying, "Father, I amuse myself much better here with you," now constantly asked to go out. In truth, what good is it for a girl to have a pretty face and a delicious toilet if she does not show them? He also noticed that Cosette no longer had the same liking for the back-yard, and at present preferred remaining in the garden, where she walked, without displeasure, near the railings. Jean Valjean never set foot in the garden, but remained in the back-yard, like the dog. Cosette, knowing herself to be beautiful, lost the grace of being ignorant of the fact, an exquisite grace, for beauty heightened by simplicity is ineffable, and nothing is so adorable as a beautiful innocent maiden, who walks along unconsciously, holding



in her hand a key of a paradise. But what she lost in ingenuous grace she regained in a pensive and serious charm. Her whole person, impregnated with the joys of youth, innocence, and beauty, exhaled a splendid melancholy. It was at this period that Marius saw her again at the Luxembourg, after an interval of six months.

Cosette was in her shadow, as Marius was in his, ready prepared to be kindled. Destiny, with its mysterious and fatal patience, brought slowly together these two beings, all charged with, and pining in, the stormy electricity of passion, these two souls which bore love, as the clouds bore thunder, and were destined to come together and be blended in a glance like the clouds in a storm. At the hour when Cosette unconsciously gave that glance which troubled Marius, Marius did not suspect that he too gave a glance which troubled Cosette. For a long time she had seen and examined him in the way girls see and examine, while looking elsewhere. Marius was still thinking Cosette ugly, when Cosette had already considered Marius handsome, but as the young man paid no attention to her he was an object of indifference. Still she could not refrain from saying to herself that he had silky hair, fine eyes, regular teeth, an agreeable voice, when she heard him talking with his companions, that he perhaps walked badly, but with a grace of his own, that he did not appear at all silly, that his whole person was noble, gentle, simple, and proud, and, lastly, that though he seemed poor he had the bearing of a gentleman.

On the day when their eyes met, and at length suddenly said to each other the first obscure and ineffable things which the eye stammers, Cosette did not understand it at first. She returned pensively to the house in the Rue de l'Ouest, where Jean Valjean was spending six weeks, according to his wont. When she awoke the next morning she thought of the young stranger, so long indifferent and cold, who now seemed to pay attention to her, and this attention did not appear at all agreeable to her; on the contrary, she felt a little angry with the handsome, disdainful man. A warlike feeling was aroused, and she felt a very childish joy at the thought that she was at length about to be avenged; knowing herself to be lovely, she felt, though in an indistinct way, that she had a weapon. Women play with their beauty as lads do with their knives, and cut themselves with it. Our readers will remember



Marius' hesitations, palpitations, and terrors; he remained on his bench, and did not approach, and this vexed Cosette. One day she said to Jean Valjean, "Father, suppose we take a walk in that direction?" Seeing that Marius did not come to her, she went to him, for, in such cases, every woman resembles Mahomet. And then, strange it is, the first symptom of true love in a young man is timidity; in a girl it is boldness. This will surprise, and yet nothing is more simple; the two sexes have a tendency to approach, and each assumes the qualities of the other. On this day Cosette's glance drove Marius mad, while his glance made Cosette tremble. Marius went away confiding, and Cosette restless. Now they adored each other. The first thing that Cosette experienced was a confused and deep sorrow: it seemed to her that her soul had become black in one day, and she no longer recognised herself. The whiteness of the soul of maidens, which is composed of coldness and gaiety, resembles snow; it melts before love, which is its sun.

Cosette knew not what love was, and she had never heard the word uttered in its earthly sense, and hence did not know what name to give to that which now troubled her. But are we the less ill through being ignorant of the name of our disease? She loved with the more passion, because she loved in ignorance; she did not know whether it is good or bad, useful or dangerous, necessary or mortal, eternal or transient, permitted or prohibited,—she loved. She would have been greatly surprised had any one said to her, "You do not sleep? that is forbidden. You do not eat? that is very wrong. You have an oppression and beating of the heart? that cannot be tolerated. You blush and turn pale when a certain person dressed in black appears at the end of a certain green walk? why, that is abominable!" She would not have understood, and would have replied, "How can I be to blame in a matter in which I can do nothing, and of which I know nothing?"

It happened that the love which presented itself was the one most in harmony with the state of her soul; it was a sort of distant adoration, a dumb contemplation, the deification of an unknown man. It was the apparition of youth to youth, the dream of nights become a romance, and remaining a dream, the wished-for phantom at length realised and incarnated, but as yet having no name, or wrong, or flaw, or claim, or defect; in a way, the distant



lover who remained idealised, a chimera which assumed a shape. Any more palpable and nearer meeting would at this first stage have startled Cosette, who was still half plunged in the magnifying fog of the cloister. It was not a lover she wanted, not even an admirer, but a vision, and she began adoring Marius as something charming, luminous, and impossible.

As extreme simplicity trenches on extreme coquetry, she smiled upon him most frankly. She daily awaited impatiently the hour for the walk; she saw Marius, she felt indescribably happy, and sincerely believed that she was expressing her entire thoughts when she said to Jean Valjean, "What a delicious garden the Luxembourg is!" Marius and Cosette were in the dark in regard to each other: they did not speak, they did not bow, they did not know each other, but they met: and like the stars in the heavens, which are millions of leagues separate, they lived by looking at each other. It is thus that Cosette gradually became a woman, and was developed into a beautiful and loving woman, conscious of her beauty and ignorant of her love. She was a coquette into the bargain, through her innocence.

All situations have their instincts, and old and eternal mother Nature warned Jean Valjean darkly of the presence of Marius. Jean Valjean trembled in the depth of his mind: he saw nothing, knew nothing, and yet regarded with obstinate attention the darkness in which he was, as if he felt on one side something being built up, on the other something crumbling away. Marius, who was also warned by the same mother Nature, did all in his power to conceal himself from the father, but, for all that, Jean Valjean sometimes perceived him. Marius' manner was no longer wise; he displayed clumsy prudence and awkward temerity. He no longer came quite close to them, as he had formerly done, he sat down at a distance, and remained in an ecstasy: he had a book, and pretended to read it; why did he pretend? Formerly he came in an old coat, and now he came every day in his new one. Jean Valjean was not quite sure whether he did not have his hair dressed: he had a strange way of rolling his eyes, and wore gloves: in short, Jean Valjean cordially detested the young man. Cosette did not allow anything to be guessed. Without knowing exactly what was the matter with her, she had a feeling that it was something which must be hidden. There



was a parallelism which annoyed Jean Valjean between the taste for dress which had come to Cosette, and the habit of wearing new clothes displayed by this stranger. It was an accident, perhaps—of course it was—but a menacing accident.

He never opened his mouth to Cosette about this stranger. One day, however, he could not refrain, and said, with that vague despair, which suddenly thrusts the probe into its own misfortune, "That young man looks like a pedant." Cosette, a year previously, when still a careless little girl, would have answered, "Oh no, he is very good-looking." Ten years later, with the love of Marius in her heart, she would have replied, "An insufferable pedant, you are quite right." At the present moment of her life and heart, she restricted herself to saying, with supreme calmness, "That young man!" as if she looked at him for the first time in her life. "How stupid I am," Jean Valjean thought, "she had not even noticed him, and now I have pointed him out to her." Oh, simplicity of old people! oh, depth of children! It is another law of these first years of suffering and care, of these sharp struggles of first love with first obstacles, that the maiden cannot be caught in any snare, while the young man falls into all. Jean Valjean had begun a secret war against Marius, which Marius, in the sublime stupidity of his passion and his age, did not guess. Jean Valjean laid all sorts of snares for him. He changed his hours, he changed his bench, he forgot his handkerchief, and went alone to the Luxembourg, and Marius went headlong into the trap, and to all these notes of interrogation which Jean Valjean planted in the road, he ingenuously answered, "Yes." Cosette, however, remained immured in her apparent carelessness and imperturbable tranquillity, so that Jean Valjean arrived at this conclusion, "That humbug is madly in love with Cosette, but Cosette does not even know that he exists."

For all that, though, he had a painful tremor in his heart, for the minute when Cosette would love might arrive at any instant. Does not all this commence with indifference? Only once did Cosette commit a fault and startle him; he arose from his bench to go home after three hours' sitting, and she said, "What, already?" Jean Valjean did not give up his walks at the Luxembourg, as he did not wish to do anything singular, or arouse Cosette's attention, but during the hours so sweet for the two lovers, while Cosette was



sending her smile to the intoxicated Marius, who only perceived this, and now saw nothing more in the world than a radiant adored face, Jean Valjean fixed on Marius flashing and terrible eyes. He who had ended by no longer believing himself capable of a malevolent feeling, had moments when he felt, if Marius were present, as if he were growing savage and ferocious, and those old depths of his soul which had formerly contained so much anger opened again against this young man. It seemed to him as if unknown craters were again being formed within him. Jean Valjean said to himself, "What does he come to seek? an adventure. What does he want? a love-affair. A love-affair! and I! What? I was first the most wretched of men, and then the most unhappy. I have spent sixty years on my knees, I have suffered all that a man can suffer, I have grown old without ever having been young; I have lived without family, parents, friends, children, or wife; I have left some of my blood on every stone, on every bramble, on every wall; I have been gentle, though men were harsh to me, and good though they were wicked. I have become an honest man again, in spite of everything; I have repented of the evil I did, and pardoned the evil done to me, and at the moment when I am rewarded, when all is finished, when I touched my object, when I have what I wish, and it is but fair as I have paid for it and earned it—all this is to fade away, and I am to lose Cosette, my love, my joy, my soul, because it has pleased a long-legged ass to saunter about the Luxembourg garden!"

Then his eyeballs were filled with a mournful and extraordinary brilliancy; he was no longer a man looking at a man, no longer an enemy looking at an enemy, he was a dog watching a robber. Our readers know the rest. Marius continued to act madly, and one day followed Cosette to the Rue de l'Ouest. Another day he spoke to the porter, and the porter spoke in his turn, and said to Jean Valjean, "Do you happen to know, sir, a curious young man, who has been making inquiries about you?" The next day Jean Valjean gave Marius that look which Marius at length noticed, and a week later Jean Valjean went away. He made a vow that he would never again set foot in the Rue de l'Ouest or the Luxembourg, and returned to the Rue Plumet. Cosette did not complain, she said nothing, she asked no questions, she did not attempt to discover any motive, for she had reached that stage when a girl fears



that her thoughts may be perused, or she may betray herself. Jean Valjean had no experience of these miseries, the only ones which are charming, and the only ones he did not know, and on this account he did not comprehend the grave significance of Cosette's silence. Still he noticed that she became sad, and he became gloomy. Inexperience was contending on both sides. Once he made an essay, by asking Cosette, "Will you go to the Luxembourg?" A beam illuminated Cosette's pale face; "Yes," she said. They went there, but three months had elapsed, and Marius no longer went there—there was no Marius present. The next day Jean Valjean again asked Cosette, "Will you go to the Luxembourg?" She answered sadly and gently, "No." Jean Valjean was hurt by the sadness, and heart-broken by the gentleness.

What was taking place in this young and already so impenetrable mind? what was going to be accomplished? what was happening to Cosette's soul? Sometimes, instead of going to bed, Jean Valjean would remain seated by his bedside with his head between his hands, and spent whole nights in asking himself, "What has Cosette on her mind?" and in thinking of the things of which she might be thinking. Oh! How he lamented his self-denial and his madness in bringing Cosette back to the world. He was the poor hero of the sacrifice, seized and hurled down by his own devotion! How he said to himself, "What have I done?" However, nothing of this was visible to Cosette—neither temper, nor roughness—it was ever the same serene, kind face. Jean Valjean's manner was even more tender and paternal than before; and if anything could have evidenced his joy it was more gentleness.

On her side, Cosette was pining; she suffered from Marius' absence, as she had revelled in his presence, singularly, and not exactly knowing why. When Jean Valjean ceased taking her for her usual walk, a feminine instinct had whispered to her heart that she must not appear to be attached to the Luxembourg, and that if she displayed indifference in the matter her father would take her back to it. But days, weeks, and months, succeeded each other, for Jean Valjean had tacitly accepted Cosette's tacit consent. She regretted it, but it was too late, and on the day when they returned to the Luxembourg, Marius was no longer there. He had disappeared then, it was all over: what could she do? would she ever see him again? She felt



a contraction of the heart which nothing dilated and which daily increased : she remained crushed, absorbed, attentive to one thought alone, with a vague and fixed eye, like a person gazing through the darkness at the deep black spot where a phantom has just vanished. Still she did not allow Jean Valjean to see anything but her pallor, and her face was ever gentle to him. This pallor, though, was more than sufficient to render Jean Valjean anxious, and at times he would ask her :

"What is the matter with you ?"

And she answered :

"Nothing."

After a silence, she would add, as if guessing that he was sad too :

"And, father, is there anything the matter with you ?"

"With me ? oh nothing," he would reply.

These two beings, who had loved each other so exclusively, and one of them with such a touching love, and had lived for a long time one through the other, were now suffering side by side, one on account of the other, without confessing it, without anger, and with a smile.

The more unhappy of the two was Jean Valjean, for youth, even in its sorrow, has always a brilliancy of its own. He felt irresistibly that Cosette was slipping from him. In the isolated life they led, and since they had gone to reside in the Rue Plumet, they had one habit. They sometimes had the pleasure of going to see the sun rise, a species of sweet joy, which is agreeable to those who are entering life and those who are leaving it. To walk about at daybreak is equivalent, to the man who loves solitude, to walking about at night with the gaiety of nature added. The streets are deserted and the birds sing. Cosette, herself a bird, generally woke at an early hour. These morning excursions were arranged on the previous evening ; he proposed, and she accepted. This was arranged like a plot ; they went out before day, and it was a delight for Cosette, as these innocent eccentricities please youth. Jean Valjean had, as we know, a liking to go to but little-frequented places, to solitary nooks, and forgotten spots. There were at that time, in the vicinity of the gates of Paris, poor fields, almost forming part of the city, where sickly wheat grew in summer, and which in autumn, after the harvest was got in, did not look as if they had been reaped, but skinned. Jean Valjean had a predilection

for these fields, and Cosette did not feel wearied there ; it was solitude for him and liberty for her. There she became a little girl again ; she ran about and almost played, she took off her bonnet, laid it on Jean Valjean's knees, and plucked flowers. She watched the butterflies, but did not catch them, for humanity and tenderness spring up with love, and the maiden who has in her heart a trembling and fragile ideal feels pity for a butterfly's wing. She twined poppies into wreaths, which she placed on her head, and when the sun poured its beams on them and rendered them almost purple, they formed a fiery crown for her fresh pink face. Even after their life had grown saddened they kept up their habit of early walks.

## CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THEIR life thus gradually became overcast ; only one amusement was left them which had formerly been a happiness, and that was to carry bread to those who were starving, and clothes to those who were cold. In these visits to the poor, in which Cosette frequently accompanied Jean Valjean, they found again some portion of their old expansiveness, and, at times, when the day had been good, when a good deal of distress had been relieved, and many children warmed and reanimated, Cosette displayed a little gaiety at night. It was at this period that they paid the visit to Jondrette's den. The day after that visit Jean Valjean appeared at an early hour in the pavilion, calm as usual, but with a large wound in his left arm, which was very inflamed and venomous, that resembled a burn, and which he accounted for in some way or other. This wound kept him at home for a whole month, for he would not see any medical man, and when Cosette pressed him, he said, "Call in the dog-doctor." Cosette dressed his wound morning and night with an air of such divine and angelic happiness at being useful to him, that Jean Valjean felt all his old joy return, his fears and anxieties dissipated, and he gazed at Cosette, saying, "Oh, the excellent wound ! the good evil !"

Cosette, seeing her father ill, had deserted the pavilion, and regained her taste for the little outhouse and the back court. She spent nearly the whole day by the side of Jean Valjean, and read to him any books he chose, which were



generally travels. Jean Valjean was regenerated : his happiness returned with ineffable radiance ; the Luxembourg, the young unknown prowler, Cosette's coldness, all these soul-clouds disappeared, and he found himself saying, " I once imagined all that ; I am an old madman ! " His happiness was such that the frightful discovery of the Thénardiens in the Jondrettes, which was so unexpected, had to some extent glided over him. He had succeeded in escaping, his trail was lost, and what did he care for the rest ! he only thought of it to pity those wretches. They were in prison, and henceforth incapable of mischief, he thought, but what a lamentable family in distress ! In the convent Sister Ste Mechthilde had taught Cosette music ; she had a voice such as a linnet would have if it possessed a soul, and at times she sang melancholy songs in the wounded man's obscure room, which Jean Valjean was delighted with. Spring arrived, and the garden was so delicious at that season of the year, that Jean Valjean said to Cosette, " You never go out, and I wish you to take a stroll. " " As you please, father, " said Cosette. And, to obey her father, she resumed her walks in the garden, generally alone, for, as we have mentioned, Jean Valjean, who was probably afraid of being seen from the gate, hardly ever entered it.

Jean Valjean's wound had been a diversion ; when Cosette saw that her father suffered less, and was recovering and seemed happy, she felt a satisfaction which she did not even notice, for it came so softly and naturally. Then, too, it was the month of March, the days were drawing out, winter was departing, and it always takes with it some portion of our sorrow ; then came April, that daybreak of summer, fresh as every dawn, and gay like all childhoods, and somewhat tearful at times like the new-born babe that it is. Nature in that month has charming beams which pass from the sky, the clouds, the trees, the fields, and the flowers, into the human heart. Cosette was still too young for this April joy, which resembled her, not to penetrate her ; insensibly, and without suspecting it, the dark cloud departed from her mind. In spring there is light in sad souls, as there is at midday in cellars. Cosette was no longer so very sad ; it was so, but she did not attempt to account for it. In the morning, after breakfast, when she succeeded in drawing her father into the garden for a quarter of an hour, and walked him up and down, while



supporting his bad arm, she did not notice that she laughed every moment and was happy. Jean Valjean was delighted to see her become ruddy-cheeked and fresh once more.

"Oh ! the famous wound !" he repeated to himself in a low voice. And he was grateful to the Thénardiens.

Cosette's sorrow, so poignant and so sharp four or five months previously, had, without her knowledge, attained the convalescent stage. Nature, spring, youth, love for her father, the gaiety of the flowers and birds, filtered gradually day by day, and drop by drop, something that almost resembled oblivion into her virginal and young soul. Was the fire entirely extinguished ? or were layers of ashes merely formed ? The fact is, that she hardly felt at all the painful and burning point, and on the day when she suddenly thought of Marius, "Why," she said, "I had almost forgotten him." This same week she noticed, while passing the garden gate, a very handsome officer in the lancers, with a wasp-like waist, a delightful uniform, the cheeks of a girl, a sabre under his arm, waxed moustaches, and lacquered schapska. In other respects, he had light hair, blue eyes flush with his head, a round, vain, insolent, and pretty face ; he was exactly the contrary of Marius. He had a cigar in his mouth, and Cosette supposed that he belonged to the regiment quartered in the barracks of the Rue de Babylone. The next day she saw him pass again, and remarked the hour. From this moment—was it an accident ?—she saw him pass nearly every day. The officer's comrades perceived that there was in this badly-kept garden, and behind this poor, old-fashioned railing, a very pretty creature, who was nearly always there when the handsome lieutenant passed, who is no stranger to the reader, as his name was Théodule Gillenormand.

"Hilloh !" they said to him, "there's a little girl making eyes at you, just look at her."

"Have I the time," the lancer replied, "to look at all the girls who look at me ?"

It was at this identical time that Marius was slowly descending to the abyss, and said, "If I could only see her again before I die !" If his wish had been realised, if he had at that moment seen Cosette looking at a lancer, he would have been unable to utter a word, but expired of grief. Whose fault would it have been ? nobody's. Marius possessed one of those temperaments which bury themselves



in chagrin and abide in it : Cosette was one of those who plunge into it and again emerge. Cosette, however, was passing through that dangerous moment, the fatal phase of feminine reverie left to itself, in which the heart of an isolated maiden resembles those vine tendrils which cling, according to chance, to the capital of a marble column or to the sign-post of an inn. It is a rapid and decisive moment, critical for every orphan, whether she be poor or rich. What was there in Cosette's soul ? passion calmed or lulled to sleep, love in a floating state : something which was limpid and brilliant, perturbed at a certain depth, and sombre lower still. The image of the handsome officer was reflected on the surface, but was there any reminiscence at the bottom, quite at the bottom ? perhaps so, but Cosette did not know.

A singular incident occurred.

In the first fortnight of April Jean Valjean went on a journey ; this, as we know, occurred from time to time at very lengthened intervals, and he remained away one or two days at the most. Where did he go ? no one knew, not even Cosette : once only she had accompanied him in a hackney coach, upon the occasion of one of these absences, to the corner of a little lane, which was called, " *L'Impasse de la blanchette*." He got out there, and the coach carried Cosette back to the *Rue de Babylone*. It was generally when money ran short in the house that Jean Valjean took these trips. Jean Valjean, then, was absent, and he had said, " I shall be back in three days." At night Cosette was alone in the drawing-room, and in order to wile away the time, she opened her piano and began singing to her own accompaniment the song of Euryanthe, " *Hunters wandering in the wood*," which is probably the finest thing we possess in the shape of music. When she had finished she remained passive, till she suddenly fancied she heard some one walking in the garden. It could not be her father, for he was away, and it could not be Toussaint, as she was in bed, for it was ten o'clock at night. Cosette went to the drawing-room shutters, which were closed, and put her ear to them ; and it seemed to her that it was the footfall of a man who was walking very gently. She hurried up to her room on the first-floor, opened a Venetian frame in her shutter, and looked out into the garden. The moon was shining bright as day, and there was nobody in it. She opened her window : the garden was perfectly

calm, and all that could be seen of the street was as deserted as usual.

Cosette thought that she had been mistaken. She had supposed that she heard the noise; it was an hallucination produced by Weber's gloomy and prodigious chorus, which opens before the mind prodigious depths, which trembles before the eye like a dizzy forest, in which we hear the cracking of the dead branches under the restless feet of the hunters, of whom we catch a glimpse in the obscurity. She thought no more of it. Moreover, Cosette was not naturally very timid: she had in her veins some of the blood of the gipsy, and the adventurer who goes about barefooted. As we may remember, she was rather a lark than a dove, and she had a stern and brave temper.

The next evening, at nightfall, she was walking about the garden. In the midst of the confused thoughts which occupied her mind, she fancied she could distinguish now and then a noise like that of the previous night, as if some one were walking in the gloom under the trees not far from her, but she said to herself that nothing so resembles the sound of a footfall on grass as the grating of two branches together, and she took no heed of it—besides, she saw nothing. She left the "thicket," and had a small grass-plot to cross ere she reached the house. The moon, which had just risen behind her, projected Cosette's shadow, as she left the clump of bushes, upon the grass in front of her, and she stopped in terror. By the side of her shadow the moon distinctly traced on the grass another singularly startling and terrible shadow—a shadow with a hat on its head. It was like the shadow of a man standing at the edge of the clump a few paces behind Cosette. For a moment she was unable to speak or cry, or call out, or stir, or turn her head, but at last she collected all her courage and boldly turned round. There was nobody; she looked on the ground and the shadow had disappeared. She went back into the shrubs, bravely searched in every corner, went as far as the railings, and discovered nothing. She felt really chilled: was it again an hallucination? what! two days in succession? one hallucination might pass, but two! The alarming point was, that the shadow was most certainly not a ghost, for ghosts never wear round hats.

The next day Jean Valjean returned, and Cosette told him what she fancied she had seen and heard. She expected to be reassured, and that her father would shrug



his shoulders and say, "You are a little goose,"—but Jean Valjean became anxious.

"Perhaps it is nothing," he said to her. He left her with some excuse, and went into the garden, where she saw him examine the railings with considerable attention. In the night she woke up; this time she was certain, and she distinctly heard some one walking just under her windows. She walked to her shutter and opened it. There was in the garden really a man holding a large stick in his hand. At the moment when she was going to cry out the moon lit up the man's face—it was her father. She went to bed again, saying, "He seems really very anxious!" Jean Valjean passed that and the two following nights in the garden, and Cosette saw him through the hole in her shutter. On the third night the moon was beginning to rise later, and it might be about one in the morning when she heard a hearty burst of laughter, and her father's voice calling her:

"Cosette!"

She leapt out of bed, put on her dressing-gown, and opened her window; her father was standing on the grass-plat below.

"I have woke you up to reassure you," he said; "look at this,—here's your shadow in the round hat."

And he showed her on the grass a shadow, which the moon designed, and which really looked rather like the spectre of a man wearing a round hat. It was an outline produced by a zinc chimney-pot with a cowl, which rose above an adjoining roof. Cosette also began laughing, all her mournful suppositions fell away, and the next morning at breakfast she jested at the ill-omened garden, haunted by the ghost of chimney-pots. Jean Valjean quite regained his ease; as for Cosette, she did not notice particularly whether the chimney-pot were really in the direction of the shadow which he had seen or fancied she saw, and whether the moon were in the same part of the heavens. She did not cross-question herself as to the singularity of a chimney-pot which is afraid of being caught in the act, and retires when its shadow is looked at, for the shadow did retire when Cosette turned round, and she fancied herself quite certain of that fact. Cosette became quite reassured, for the demonstration seemed to her perfect, and the thought left her brain that there could have been any one walking about the garden by night. A few days afterwards, however, a new incident occurred.

## CHAPTER LXXXVII.

IN the garden, near the railings looking out on the street, there was a stone bench, protected from the gaze of the curious by a hedge, but which could have been easily reached by thrusting an arm through the railings and the hedge. One evening in this same month of April, Jean Valjean had gone out, and Cosette, after sunset, was seated on this bench. The wind was freshening in the trees, and Cosette was reflecting. An objectless sorrow was gradually gaining on her, the invincible sorrow which night produces, and which comes perhaps—for who knows?—from the mystery of the tomb which is yawning at the moment. Possibly Fantine was in that shadow.

Cosette rose, and slowly went round the garden, walking on the dew-laden grass, and saying to herself through the sort of melancholy somnambulism in which she was plunged, "I ought to have wooden shoes to walk in the garden at this hour; I shall catch cold." She returned to the bench, but at the moment when she was going to sit down she noticed at the place she had left a rather large stone, which had evidently not been there a moment before. Cosette looked at the stone, asking herself what it meant; all at once the idea that the stone had not reached the bench of itself, that some one had placed it there, and that an arm had been passed through the grating, occurred to her and frightened her. This time it was a real fear, for there was the stone. No doubt was possible; she did not touch it, but fled without daring to look behind her, sought refuge in the house, and at once shuttered, barred, and bolted the French window opening on the steps. Then she asked Toussaint:

"Has my father come in?"

"No, miss."

(We have indicated once for all Toussaint's stammering, and we ask leave no longer to accentuate it, as we feel a musical notation of an infirmity to be repulsive.)

Jean Valjean, a thoughtful man, and stroller by night, often did not return till a late hour.

"Toussaint," Cosette continued, "be careful to put up the bars to the shutters looking on the garden, and to place the little iron things in the rings that close them."

"Oh, I am sure I will, miss."



Toussaint did not fail, and Cosette was well aware of the fact, but she could not refrain from adding :

"For it is so desolate here."

"Well, that's true," said Toussaint; "we might be murdered before we had the time to say *Ouf!* and then, too, master does not sleep in the house. But don't be frightened, miss. I fasten up the windows like Bastilles. Lone women! I should think that is enough to make a body shudder. Only think! to see men coming into your bedroom and hear them say, '*Hold your tongue!*' and then they begin to cut your throat. It is not so much the dying, for everybody dies, and we know that we must do so, but it is the abomination of feeling those fellows touch you; and then their knives are not sharp, perhaps; oh, Lord!"

"Hold your tongue," said Cosette, "and fasten up everything securely."

Cosette, terrified by the drama improvised by Toussaint, and perhaps too by the apparitions of the last week, which returned to her mind, did not even dare to say to her, "Just go and look at the stone laid on the bench," for fear of having to open the garden gate again, and the men might walk in. She had all the doors and windows carefully closed, made Toussaint examine the whole house from cellar to attic, locked herself in her bedroom, looked under the bed, and slept badly. The whole night through she saw the stone as large as a mountain and full of caverns. At sunrise—the peculiarity of sunrise is to make us laugh at all our terrors of the night, and our laughter is always proportioned to the fear we have felt—at sunrise, Cosette, on waking, saw her terror like a nightmare, and said to herself, "What could I be thinking about! it was like the steps which I fancied I heard last week in the garden at night! It is like the shadow of the chimney-pot, am I going to turn coward now?" The sun which poured through the crevices of her shutters and made the damask curtains one mass of purple, reassured her so fully that all faded away in her mind, even to the stone.

"There was no more a stone on the bench than there was a man in a round hat in the garden. I dreamt of the stone like the rest."

She dressed herself, went down into the garden, and felt a cold perspiration all over her—the stone was there. But this only lasted for a moment, for what is terror by night is curiosity by day.

"Nonsense!" she said, "I'll see."

She raised the stone, which was of some size, and there was something under it that resembled a letter; it was an envelope of white paper. Cosette seized it; there was no address on it, and it was not sealed up. Still, the envelope, though open, was not empty, for papers could be seen inside. Cosette no longer suffered from terror, nor was it curiosity; it was a commencement of anxiety. Cosette took out a small quire of paper, each page of which was numbered, and bore several lines written in a very nice and delicate hand, so Cosette thought. She looked for a name, but there was none; for a signature, but there was none either. For whom was the packet intended? probably for herself, as a hand had laid it on the bench. From whom did it come? An irresistible fascination seized upon her; she tried to turn her eyes away from these pages, which trembled in her hand. She looked at the sky, the street, the acacias all bathed in light, the pigeons circling round an adjoining roof, and then her eye settled on the manuscript, and she said to herself that she must know what was inside it. This is what she read:

The reduction of the Universe to a single being, the expansion of a single being as far as God, such is love.

Love is the salutation of the angel to the stars.

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How sad is the soul when it is sad from love!

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What a void is the absence of the being who alone fills the world! Oh! how true it is that the beloved being becomes God! One would conceive that God would be jealous if the Father of all had not evidently made creation for the soul, and the soul for love!

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A glimpse of a smile under a white crape hat with a lilac coronet is enough for the soul to enter into the palace of dreams.

---

God is behind all things, but all things hide God. Things are black, creatures are opaque. To love a being is to render her transparent.

---

Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when,



whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.

---

Separated lovers deceive absence by a thousand chimerical things which still have their reality. They are prevented from seeing each other, they cannot write to each other; they find a multitude of mysterious means of correspondence. They commission the song of the birds, the perfume of flowers, the laughter of children, the light of the sun, the sighs of the wind, the beams of the stars, the whole creation. And why not? All the works of God were made to serve love. Love is powerful enough to charge all nature with its messages.

O Spring! thou art a letter which I write to her.

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The future belongs still more to the heart than to the mind. To love is the only thing which can occupy and fill up eternity. The infinite requires the inexhaustible.

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Love partakes of the soul itself. It is of the same nature. Like it, it is a divine spark; like it, it is incorruptible, indivisible, imperishable. It is a point of fire which is within us, which is immortal and infinite, which nothing can limit and which nothing can extinguish. We feel it burn even in the marrow of our bones, and we see it radiate even to the depths of the sky.

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God can add nothing to the happiness of those who love one another but to give them unending duration. After a life of love, an eternity of love is an augmentation indeed; but to increase in its intensity the ineffable felicity which love gives to the soul in this world is impossible, even with God. God is the plenitude of heaven; love is the plenitude of man.

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When love has melted and mingled two beings into an angelic and sacred unity, the secret of life is found for them; they are then but the two terms of a single destiny; they are then but the two wings of a single spirit. Love, soar!

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The day that a woman who is passing before you sheds a light upon you as she goes, you are lost, you love. You have then but one thing to do: to think of her so earnestly that she will be compelled to think of you.

What love begins can be finished only by God.

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True love is in despair and in raptures over a glove lost or a handkerchief found, and it requires eternity for its devotion and its hopes. It is composed at the same time of the infinitely great and the infinitely small.

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If you are stone, be lodestone; if you are plant, be sensitive; if you are man, be love.

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Nothing suffices love. We have happiness, we wish for paradise; we have paradise, we wish for Heaven.

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O ye who love each other, all this is in love. Be wise enough to find it. Love has, as much as Heaven, contemplation, and more than Heaven, passionate delight.

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"Does she still come to the Luxembourg?" "No, Monsieur." "She hears Mass in this church, does she not?" "She comes here no more." "Does she still live in this house?" "She has moved away!" "Whither has she gone to live?" "She did not say."

What a gloomy thing not to know the address of one's soul?

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Love has its childlikenesses, the other passions have their littlenesses. Shame on the passions which render man little! Honour to that which makes him a child!

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There is a strange thing, do you know it? I am in the night. There is a being who has gone away and carried the heavens with her.

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You who suffer because you love, love still more. To die of love is to live by it.

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O joy of the birds! It is because they have their nest that they have their song.

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Love is a celestial respiration of the air of paradise.

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Deep hearts, wise minds take life as God has made it; it is a long trial, an unintelligible preparation for the unknown destiny. This destiny, the true one, begins for man at the



first step in the interior of the tomb. Then something appears to him and he begins to discern the definite. The definite ! Think of this word. The living see the infinite ; the definite reveals itself only to the dead. Meantime, love and suffer, hope and contemplate. Woe, alas ! to him who shall have loved bodies, forms, appearances only. Death will take all from him. Try to love souls, you shall find them again.

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I met in the street a very poor young man who was in love. His hat was old, his coat was threadbare—there were holes at his elbows ; the water passed through his shoes and the stars through his soul.

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What a grand thing to be loved ! What a grander thing still to love ! The heart becomes heroic through passion. It is no longer composed of anything but what is pure ; it no longer rests upon anything but what is elevated and great. An unworthy thought can no more spring up in it than a nettle upon a glacier. The soul lofty and serene, inaccessible to common passions and common emotions, rising above the clouds and the shadows of this world, its follies, its falsehoods, its hates, its vanities, its miseries, inhabits the blue of the skies, and only feels more the deep and subterranean commotions of destiny, as the summit of the mountains feels the quaking of the earth.

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Were there not some one who loved, the sun would be extinguished.

While reading these lines Cosette gradually fell into a reverie, and at the moment when she raised her eyes from the last page the pretty officer passed triumphantly in front of the gate, for it was his hour. Cosette found him hideous. She began gazing at the roll of paper again ; it was in an exquisite handwriting, Cosette thought, all written by the same hand, but with different inks, some very black, others pale, as when ink is put in the stand, and consequently on different days. It was, therefore, a thought expanded on the paper, sigh by sigh, irregularly, without order, without choice, without purpose, accidentally. Cosette had never read anything like it ; this manuscript, in which she saw more light than obscurity, produced on her the effect of the door of a shrine left ajar. Each of these mysterious lines

flashed in her eyes, and inundated her heart with a strange light. The education which she had received had always spoken to her of the soul, and not of love, much as if a person were to speak of the burning log and say nothing about the flame. This manuscript of fifteen pages suddenly and gently revealed to her the whole of love, sorrow, destiny, life, eternity, the beginning and the end. It was like a hand which opened and threw upon her a galaxy of beams. She felt in these few lines an impassioned, ardent, generous, and honest nature, a sacred will, an immense grief, and an immense hope; a contracted heart, and an expanded ecstasy. What was the manuscript? a letter. A letter without address, name, or signature, pressing, and disinterested, an enigma composed of truths, a love-message fit to be borne by an angel and read by a virgin; a rendez-vous appointed off the world, a sweet love-letter written by a phantom to a shadow. It was a tranquil and crushed absent man, who seemed ready to seek a refuge in death, and who sent to his absent love the secret of destiny, the key of life. It had been written with the foot in the grave and the hand in heaven, and these lines, which had fallen one by one on the paper, were what might be called drops of the soul.

And now, from whom could these pages come? Who could have written them? Cosette did not hesitate for a moment.—only from one man, from *him*! Daylight had returned to her mind and everything reappeared. She experienced an extraordinary joy and a profound agony. It was he! He who wrote to her! he had been there! his arm had been passed through the railings! while she was forgetting him he had found her again! But had she forgotten him? no, never! she was mad to have thought so for a moment, for she had ever loved, ever adored him. The fire was covered, and had smouldered for a while, but, as she now plainly saw, it had spread its ravages, and again burst into a flame which entirely kindled her. This letter was like a spark that had fallen from the other soul into hers; she felt the fire begin again, and she was penetrated by every word of the manuscript. "Oh yes," she said to herself, "how well I recognise all this! I had read it all already in his eyes."

As she finished reading it for the third time Lieutenant Théodule returned past the railings, and clanked his spurs on the pavement. Cosette was obliged to raise her eyes, and she found him insipid, silly, stupid, useless, fatuous,



displeasing, impertinent, and very ugly. The officer thought himself bound to smile, and she turned away ashamed and indignant; she would have gladly thrown something at his head. She ran away, re-entered the house, and locked herself in her bedroom, to re-read the letter, learn it by heart, and dream. When she had read it thoroughly she kissed it and hid it in her bosom. It was all over. Cosette had fallen back into the profound seraphic love, the Paradisaic abyss had opened again. The whole day through Cosette was in a state of bewilderment; she hardly thought, and her ideas were confused in her brain; she could not succeed in forming any conjectures, and she hoped through a tremor, what? vague things. She did not dare promise herself anything, and she would not refuse herself anything. A pallor passed over her face, and a quiver over her limbs, and she fancied at moments that it was all a chimera, and said to herself, "Is it real?" then she felt the well-beloved paper under her dress, pressed it to her heart, felt the corners against her flesh, and if Jean Valjean had seen her at that moment he would have shuddered at the luminous and strange joy which overflowed from her eyelids. "Oh yes," she thought, "it is certainly his! this comes from him for me!" And she said to herself that an intervention of the angels, a celestial accident, had restored him to her. O transfiguration of love! O dreams! this celestial accident, this intervention of angels, was the ball of bread cast by one robber to another from the Charlemagne yard to the lions' den, over the buildings of La Force.

When night came Jean Valjean went out, and Cosette dressed herself. She arranged her hair in the way that best became her, and put on a dress whose body, being cut a little too low, displayed the whole of the neck, and was therefore, as girls say, "rather indecent." It was not the least in the world indecent, but it was prettier than the former fashion. She dressed herself in this way without knowing why. Was she going out? No. Did she expect a visitor? No. She went down into the garden as it grew dark; Toussaint was engaged in her kitchen, which looked out on the back-yard. Cosette began walking under the branches, removing them from time to time with her hand, as some were very low, and thus reached the bench. The stone was still there, and she sat down and laid her beautiful white hand on the stone, as if to caress and thank it. All at once she had that indescribable feeling which people







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"She twined poppies into wreaths, which she placed  
on her head."

experience even without seeing, when some one is standing behind them. She turned her head and rose—it was he. He was bareheaded, and seemed pale and thin, and his black clothes could be scarce distinguished. The twilight rendered his glorious forehead livid, and covered his eyes with darkness, and he had, beneath a veil of incomparable gentleness, something belonging to death and night. His face was lit up by the flush of departing day, and by the thoughts of an expiring soul. He seemed as if he were not yet a spectre, but was no longer a man. His hat was thrown among the shrubs a few paces from him. Cosette, though ready to faint, did not utter a cry; she slowly recoiled, as she felt herself attracted, but he did not stir. Through the ineffable sadness that enveloped him she felt the glance of the eyes which she could not see. Cosette, in recoiling, came to a tree, and leaned against it; had it not been for this tree she would have fallen. Then she heard his voice, that voice which she had really never heard before, scarce louder than the rustling of the foliage, as he murmured:

“Pardon me for being here; my heart is swollen, I could not live as I was, and I have come. Have you read what I placed on that bench? do you recognise me at all? do not be frightened at me. Do you remember that day when you looked at me, now so long ago? It was in the Luxembourg garden, near the Gladiator, and the days on which you passed before me were June 16 and July 2: it is nearly a year ago. I have not seen you for a very long time now. I inquired of the woman who lets out chairs, and she said that you no longer came there. You lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, on the third-floor front of a new house. You see that I know. I followed you, what else could I do? and then you disappeared. I fancied that I saw you pass once as I was reading the papers under the Odéon Arcade, and ran after you, but no, it was a person wearing a bonnet like yours. At night I come here—fear nothing, no one sees me—and I walk very softly that you may not hear me, for you might be alarmed. The other evening I was behind you, you turned round, and I fled. Once I heard you sing, and I was happy; does it harm you that I should listen to you through the shutters while singing? no, it cannot harm you. You see you are my angel, so let me come now and then, and I believe that I am going to die. If you only knew how I adore you! But



forgive me. I am speaking to you, I know not what I am saying, perhaps I offend you—do I offend you?”

“Oh, my mother!” she said.

And she sank down as if she were dying. He seized her in his arms, and pressed her to his heart, not knowing what he did. He supported her while himself tottering. He felt as if his head were full of smoke; flashes passed between his eyelashes; his ideas left him, and it seemed to him as if he were accomplishing a religious act, and yet committing a profanation. However, he had not the least desire for this ravishing creature, whose form he felt against his chest; he was distractedly in love. She took his hand, and laid it on her heart; he felt the paper there, and stammered:

“You love me then?”

She answered in so low a voice, that it was almost an inaudible breath:

“Silence! you know I do.”

And she hid her blushing face in the chest of the proud and intoxicated young man. He fell on to the bench, and she by his side. They no longer found words, and the stars were beginning to twinkle. How came it that their lips met? how comes it that the bird sings, the snow melts, the rose opens, May bursts into life, and the dawn grows white behind the black trees on the rustling tops of the hills? One kiss, and that was all; both trembled and gazed at each other in the darkness with flashing eyes. They neither felt the fresh night nor the cold stone, nor the damp grass, nor the moist soil,—they looked at each other, and their hearts were full of thoughts. Their hands were clasped without their cognisance. She did not ask him, did not even think of it, how he had managed to enter the garden, for it seemed to her so simple that he should be there. From time to time Marius’ knee touched Cosette’s knee, and both quivered. At intervals Cosette stammered a word; her soul trembled on her lips like the dewdrop on a flower.

Gradually they conversed, and expansiveness succeeded the silence which is plenitude. The night was serene and splendid above their heads and these two beings, pure as spirits, told each other everything,—their dreams, their intoxication, their ecstasy, their chimeras, their depressions, how they had adored and longed for each other at a distance, and their mutual despair when they ceased to

meet. They confided to each other in an ideal intimacy which nothing henceforth could increase, all their most hidden and mysterious thoughts. They told each other, with a candid faith in their illusions, all that love, youth, and the remnant of childhood which they still had, brought to their minds; their two hearts were poured into each other, so that at the end of an hour the young man had the maiden's soul and the maiden his. They were mutually penetrated, enchanted, and dazzled. When they had finished, when they had told each other everything, she laid her head on his shoulder and asked him:

"What is your name?"

"Marius," he said; "and yours?"

"Mine is Cosette."

#### CHAPTER LXXNVIII.

At La Force, about this time the following had occurred. An escape had been concerted between Babet, Brujon, Gueulemer, and Thénardier, although Thénardier was in secret confinement. Babet had managed the affair on his own account during the day, and Montparnasse was to help them outside. Brujon, while spending a month in a punishment room, had time, first, to make a rope, and, secondly, to ripen a plan. Formerly, these severe places, in which prison discipline leaves the prisoner to himself, were composed of four stone walls, a stone ceiling, a brick pavement, a camp-bed, a grated skylight, and a gate lined with iron, and were called dungeons; but the dungeon was considered too horrible, so now it is composed of an iron gate, a grated skylight, a camp-bed, a brick pavement, a stone ceiling, four stone walls, and it is called a "punishment room." A little daylight is visible about midday. The inconvenience of these rooms, which, as we see, are not dungeons, is to leave beings to think who ought to be set to work. Brujon, therefore, reflected, and he left the punishment room with a cord. As he was considered very dangerous in the Charlemagne yard, he was placed in the New Building, and the first thing he found there was Gueulemer, the second a nail; Gueulemer, that is to say, crime, and a nail, that is to say, liberty.

Brujon, of whom it is time to form a complete idea, was,



with the appearance of a delicate complexion and a deeply premeditated languor, a polished, intelligent robber, who possessed a caressing look and an atrocious smile. His look was the result of his will, and his smile the result of his nature. His first studies in his art were directed to roofs, and he had given a great impulse to the trade of lead-stealers, who strip roofs and carry away gutters by the process called *au gras double*. What finally rendered the moment favourable for an attempted escape was that workmen were at this very moment engaged in relaying and retipping the prison slates. The St. Bernard was not absolutely isolated from the Charlemagne and St. Louis yards, for there were on the roof scaffolding and ladders, in other words, bridges and staircases, on the side of deliverance. The New Building, which was the most cracked and decrepit affair possible to imagine, was the weak point of the building. Saltpetre had so gnawed the walls that it had been found necessary to prop up and shore the ceilings of the dormitories, because stones became detached and fell on the prisoners' beds. In spite of this antiquity, the error was committed of confining in the New Building the most dangerous prisoners, and placing in it the "heavy cases," as is said in the prison jargon. The New Building contained four sleeping-wards, one above the other, and a garret-floor called the "Fine Air." A large stove pipe, probably belonging to some old kitchen of the Ducs de la Force, started from the ground-floor, passed through the four storeys, cut in two the sleeping-wards, in which it figured as a sort of flattened pillar, and issued through a hole in the roof. Gueulemer and Brujon were in the same ward, and had been placed through precaution on the ground-floor. Accident willed it that the head of their beds rested against the stove pipe. Thénardier was exactly above their heads in the attic called Fine Air.

The passer-by, who stops in the Rue Culture Sainte Catherine, after passing the firemen's barracks, and in front of the bath-house gateway, sees a courtyard full of flowers and shrubs in boxes, at the end of which is a small white rotunda with two wings, enlivened by green shutters, the bucolic dream of Jean Jacques. Not ten years ago there rose above this rotunda a black, enormous, frightful, naked wall, which was the outer wall of La Force. This wall behind this rotunda was like a glimpse of Milton caught behind Berquin. High though it was, this wall



was surmounted by an even blacker roof, which could be seen beyond,—it was the roof of the New Building.

Four dormer-windows protected by bars could be seen in it, and they were the windows of Fine Air, and a chimney passed through the roof, which was the chimney of the sleeping-wards. Fine Air, the attic-floor of the New Building, was a species of large hall, closed with triple gratings and iron-lined doors, starred with enormous nails. When you entered by the north end, you had on your left the four dormers, and on your right facing these, four square and spacious cages, separated by narrow passages, built up to breast-height of masonry, and the rest to the roof of iron bars. Thénardier had been confined in solitary punishment since the night of February 3. It was never discovered how, or by what connivance, he succeeded in procuring and concealing a bottle of that prepared wine, invented, so 'tis said, by Desrues, in which a narcotic is mixed, and which the band of the Endormeurs rendered celebrated. There are in many prisons treacherous turnkeys, half gaolers, half robbers, who assist in escapes, and sell to the police a faithless domesticity.

On this very night, then, when little Gavroche picked up the two straying children, Brujon and Gueulemer, who knew that Babet, who had escaped that same morning, was waiting for them in the street with Montparnasse, gently rose, and began breaking open with a nail, which Brujon had found, the stove pipe against which their beds were. The rubbish fell on Brujon's bed, so that it was not heard, and the gusts of wind mingled with the thunder shook the doors on their hinges, and produced a frightful and hideous row in the prison. Those prisoners who awoke pretended to fall asleep again, and left Brujon and Gueulemer to do as they pleased; and Brujon was skilful, and Gueulemer was vigorous. Before any sound had reached the watchman sleeping in the grated cell which looked into the ward, the wall was broken through, the chimney escalated, the iron trellis which closed the upper opening of the chimney forced, and the two formidable bandits were on the roof. The rain and the wind were tremendous, and the roof was slippery.

"What a fine night for an escape!" said Brujon.

An abyss of six feet in width and eighty feet deep separated them from the surrounding wall, and at the bottom of this abyss they could see a sentry's musket



gleaming in the darkness. They fastened to the ends of the chimney bars which they had just broken the rope which Brujon had woven in the cell, threw the other end over the outer wall, crossed the abyss at a bound, clung to the coping of the wall, bestraddled it, glided in turn along the rope to a little roof which joins the bath-house, pulled their rope to them, jumped into the yard of the bath-house, pulled the porter's string, opened the gateway, and found themselves in the street. Not three-quarters of an hour had elapsed since they were standing on the bed, nail in hand, and with their plan in their heads; a few minutes after, they had rejoined Babet and Montparnasse, who were prowling in the neighbourhood. On drawing the cord to them they broke it, and a piece had remained fastened to the chimney on the roof, but they had met with no other accident beyond almost entirely skinning their fingers. On this night Thénardier was warned, though it was impossible to discover how, and did not go to sleep. At about one in the morning, when the night was very black, he saw two shadows passing, in the rain and gusts, the window opposite his cage. One stopped just long enough to give a look; it was Brujon. Thénardier saw him, and understood—that was enough for him. Thénardier, reported to be a burglar, and detained on the charge of attempting to obtain money at night by violence, was kept under constant watch, and a sentry, relieved every two hours, walked in front of his cage with a loaded musket. The Fine Air was lighted by a skylight, and the prisoner had on his feet a pair of fetters weighing fifty pounds. Every day at four in the afternoon, a turnkey, escorted by two mastiffs—such things still happened at that day—entered his cage, placed near his bed a black loaf of two pounds' weight, a water-jug, and a bowl of very weak broth in which a few beans floated, inspected his fetters, and tapped the bars. This man with his dogs returned twice during the night.

Thénardier had obtained permission to keep a sort of iron pin which he used to nail his bread to the wall, in order, as he said, "to preserve it from the rats." As Thénardier was under a constant watch, this pin did not seem dangerous; still it was remembered at a later day that a turnkey had said, "It would be better only to leave him a wooden skewer." At two in the morning the sentry, who was an old soldier, was changed, and a recruit substituted for him. A few minutes after, the

man with the dogs paid his visit, and went away without having notice of anything, except the youth and peasant look of the "Turlourou." Two hours after, when they came to relieve this conscript, they found him asleep, and lying like a log by the side of Thénardier's cage. As for the prisoner, he was no longer there; his severed fetters lay on the ground, and there was a hole in the ceiling of his cage, and another above it in the roof. A plank of his bed had been torn out and carried off, for it could not be found. In the cell was also found the half-empty bottle, containing the rest of the drugged wine with which the young soldier had been sent to sleep. The soldier's bayonet had disappeared. At the moment when all this was discovered, Thénardier was supposed to be out of reach; the truth was, that he was no longer in the New Building, but was still in great danger. Thénardier, on reaching the roof of the New Building, found the remainder of Brujon's rope hanging from the chimney bars, but as the broken cord was much too short, he was unable to cross the outer wall as Brujon and Gueulemer had done.

When you turn out of the Rue des Ballets into the Rue du Roi de Sicile, you notice almost directly on your right a dirty hole. In the last century a house stood here, of which only the back wall exists, a perfect ruin of a wall which rises to the height of a third storey between the adjacent buildings. This ruin can be recognised by two large square windows, still visible; the centre one, the one nearest the right-hand gable, is barred by a shored-up beam, and through these windows could be seen, formerly, a lofty lugubrious wall, which was a portion of the outer wall of La Force. The gap which the demolished house has left in the street is half filled up with a hoarding of rotten planks, supported by five stone pillars, and inside is a small hut built against the still standing ruin. The boarding has a door in it which, a few years ago, was merely closed with a hasp. It was the top of this ruin which Thénardier had attained a little after three in the morning. How did he get there? This was never explained or understood. The lightning flashes must at once have impeded and helped him. Did he employ the ladders and scaffolding of the slaters to pass from roof to roof, over the buildings of the Charlemagne yard, those of the St. Louis yard, the outer, and thence reach the ruined wall in the Rue du Roi de Sicile? But there were gaps in this



route which seemed to render it impossible. Had he laid the plank from his bed as a bridge from the roof of Fine Air to the outer wall, and crawled on his stomach along the coping, all round the prison till he reached the ruin? But the outer wall of La Force was very irregular, it rose and sank; and then, too, the sentries must have seen the fugitive's dark outline,—and thus the road taken by Thénardier remains almost inexplicable. Had he, illumined by that frightful thirst for liberty which changes precipices into moats, iron bars into reeds, a cripple into an athlete, a gouty patient into a bird, stupidity into instinct, instinct into intellect, and intellect into genius, invented and improvised a third mode of escape? However this may be, Thénardier, dripping with perspiration, wet through with rain, with his clothes in rags, his hands scarified, his elbows bleeding, and his knees lacerated, reached the ruin-wall, lay down full length on it, and then his strength failed him. A perpendicular wall as high as a three-storeyed house separated him from the street, and the rope he had was too short. He waited there, pale, exhausted, despairing, though just now so hopeful, still covered by night, but saying to himself that day would soon come; horrified at the thought that he should shortly hear it strike four from the neighbouring clock of St. Paul, the hour when the sentry would be changed and be found asleep under the hole in the roof. Thénardier regarded with stupor at such a depth below, and in the light of the lamps, the wet black pavement—that desired and terrific pavement which was death and which was liberty. He asked himself whether his three accomplices had succeeded in escaping, whether they were waiting for him, and if they would come to his help? He listened: excepting a patrol, no one had passed through the street since he had been lying there. Nearly all the market carts from Montreuil, Charonne, Vincennes, and Bercy came into town by the Rue St. Antoine.

Four o'clock struck, and Thénardier trembled. A few minutes after, the startled and confused noise which follows the discovery of an escape broke out in the prison. The sound of doors being opened and shut, the creaking of gates on their hinges, the tumult at the guardroom, and the clang of musket butts on the pavement of the yards, reached his ears; lights flashed past the grated windows of the sleeping-wards, a torch ran along the roof of the New Building, and



the sappers were called out. Three caps which the torch lit up in the rain, came and went along the roofs, and at the same time Thénardier saw, in the direction of the Bastille, a livid gleam mournfully whitening the sky. He was on the top of a wall ten inches wide, lying in the pitiless rain, with a gulf on his right hand and on his left, unable to stir, suffering from the dizziness of a possible fall and the horror of a certain arrest, and his mind, like the clapper of a bell, went from one of these ideas to the other: "Dead if I fall, caught if I remain." In this state of agony he suddenly saw in the still perfectly dark street, a man, who glided along the walls and came from the Rue Pavée, stop in the gap over which Thénardier was, as it were, suspended. This man was joined by a second, who walked with similar caution, then by a third, and then by a fourth. When these men were together, one of them raised the hasp of the hoarding gate, and all four entered the enclosure where the hut is, and stood exactly under Thénardier. These men had evidently selected this place to consult in, in order not to be seen by passers-by, or the sentry guarding the wicket of La Force a few paces distant. We must say, too, that the rain kept this sentry confined to his box. Thénardier, unable to distinguish their faces, listened to their remarks with the desperate attention of a wretch who feels himself lost. He felt something like hope pass before his eyes, when he heard these men talking slang. The first said, in a low voice but distinctly, something which we had better translate.

"Let us be off. What are we doing here?"

The second replied:

"It is raining hard enough to put out the fire of hell. And then the police will pass soon; besides, there is a sentry on. We shall get ourselves arrested here."

Two words employed, *icigo* and *icicaille*, which both mean here, and which belong, the first to the flash language of the barrières, and the second to that of the Temple, were rays of light for Thénardier. By *icigo* he recognised Brujon, who was a prowler at the barrières, and by *icicaille* Babet, who, among all his other trades, had been a second-hand clothes-dealer at the Temple. The antique slang of the great century is only talked now at the Temple, and Babet was the only man who spoke it in its purity. Had it not been for *icicaille*, Thénardier could not have recognised him, for he had completely altered his voice. In the meanwhile the third man had interfered.



"There is nothing to hurry us, so let us wait a little. What is there to tell us that he does not want us?"

Through this, which was only French, Thénardier recognised Montparnasse, whose pride it was to understand all the slang dialects and not speak one of them. As for the fourth man, he held his tongue, but his wide shoulders denounced him, and Thénardier did not hesitate; it was Gueulemer. Brujon replied almost impetuously, but still in a low voice:

"What is that you are saying? The landlord has not been able to escape. A man must be a clever hand to tear up his shirt and cut his sheets in strips to make a rope; to make holes in doors; manufacture false papers; make false keys; file his fetters through; hang his rope out of the window; hide and disguise himself. The old chap cannot have done this, for he does not know how to work."

Babet added, still in the correct classic slang which Pouiller and Cartouche spoke, and which is to the new, bold, and coloured slang which Brujon employed what the language of Racine is to that of André Chénier.

"Your landlord has been caught in the act, for he is only an apprentice. He has let himself be duped by a spy, perhaps by a sheep, who played the part. Listen, Montparnasse; do you hear those shouts in the prison? You saw all those candles; he is caught again, and will get off with twenty years. I am not frightened, I am no coward, as is well known, but there is nothing to be done, and we shall be trapped. Do not feel offended, but come with us, and let us drink a bottle of old wine together."

"Friends must not be left in a difficulty," Montparnasse growled.

"I tell you he is caught again," Brujon resumed, "and at this moment the landlord is not worth a halfpenny. We can do nothing for him, so let us be off. I feel at every moment as if a policeman were holding me in his hand."

Montparnasse resisted but feebly; the truth is, that these four men, with the fidelity which bandits have or never deserting each other, had prowled the whole night round La Force, in spite of the peril they incurred, in the hope of seeing Thénardier appear on the top of some wall. But the night which became really too favourable, for the rain rendered all the streets deserted, the cold which attacked them, their dripping clothes, their worn-out shoes, the alarming noises which had broken out in the prison, the

hours which had elapsed, the patrols they had met, the hope which departed and the fear that returned,—all this urged them to retreat. Montparnasse himself, who was perhaps Thénardier's son-in-law in a certain sense, yielded, and in a moment they would be gone. Thénardier gasped on his wall like the shipwrecked crew of the *Méduse* did on their raft, when they watched the ship which they had sighted, fade away on the horizon. He did not dare call to them, for a cry overheard might ruin everything, but he had an idea, a last idea, an inspiration,—he took from his pocket the end of Brujon's rope which he had detached from the chimney of the New Building, and threw it at their feet.

"A cord!" said Babet.

"My cord!" said Brujon.

"The landlord is there," said Montparnasse. They raised their eyes, and Thénardier thrust out his head a little.

"Quiet," said Montparnasse; "have you the other end of the rope, Brujon?"

"Yes."

"Fasten the two ends together, we will throw the rope to him, he will attach it to the wall, and it will be long enough for him to come down."

Thénardier ventured to raise his voice:

"I am wet through."

"We'll warm you."

"I cannot stir."

"You will slip down, and we will catch you."

"My hands are swollen."

"Only just fasten the rope to the wall."

"I can't."

"One of us must go up," said Montparnasse.

"Three storeys!" Brujon ejaculated.

An old plaster conduit pipe, which had served as a chimney for a stove, formerly lit in the hut, ran along the wall almost to the spot where Thénardier was lying. This pipe, which at that day was full of cracks and holes, has since fallen down, but its traces may be seen. It was very narrow.

"It would be possible to mount by that," said Montparnasse.

"By that pipe?" Babet exclaimed; "a man? oh no, a boy is required."

"Yes, a boy," Brujon said in affirmative.



"Where can we find one?" Gueulemer said.

"Wait a minute," Montparnasse said, "I have it."

He gently opened the hoarding door, assured himself that there was no passer-by in the street, went out, shut the gate cautiously after him, and ran off in the direction of the Bastille. He knew that in that vicinity he could find Gavroche. Seven or eight minutes elapsed, eight thousand centuries for Thénardier; Babet, Brujon, and Gueulemer did not open their lips: the door opened again, and Montparnasse came in, panting and leading Gavroche. The rain continued to make the street completely deserted. Little Gavroche stepped into the enclosure and looked calmly at the faces of the bandits. The rain was dripping from his hair, and Gueulemer said to him:

"Brat, are you a man?"

Gavroche shrugged his shoulders, and replied:

"A child like me is a man, and men like you are children."

"What a well-hung tongue the brat has!" Babet exclaimed.

"The boy of Paris is not made of wet paste," Brujon added.

"What do you want of me?" said Gavroche.

Montparnasse answered:

"Climb up that pipe."

"With this rope," Babet remarked.

"And fasten it," Brujon continued.

"At the top of the wall," Babet added.

"To the cross-bar of the window," Brujon said finally.

"What next?" asked Gavroche.

"Here it is," said Gueulemer.

The gamin examined the rope, the chimney, the wall, and the window, and gave that indescribable and disdainful smack of the lips which signifies, "What is it?"

"There is a man up there whom you will save," Montparnasse replied.

"Are you willing?" Brujon asked.

"Ass!" the lad replied, as if the question seemed to him extraordinary; and he took off his shoes.

Gueulemer seized Gavroche by one arm, placed him on the roof of the penthouses, where mouldering planks bent under the boy's weight, and handed him the rope which Brujon had joined again during the absence of Montparnasse. The gamin turned to the chimney, which it

was an easy task to enter, thanks to a large crevice close to the roof. At the moment when he was going to ascend, Thénardier, who saw safety and life approaching, leant over the edge of the wall; the first gleam of day whitened his dark forehead, his livid cheek-bones, his sharp savage nose, his bristling gray beard, and Gavroche recognised him.

"Hilloh!" he said, "it's my father; well, that won't stop me."

And, taking the rope between his teeth, he resolutely commenced his ascent. He reached the top of the wall, straddled across it like a horse, and securely fastened the rope to the topmost cross-bar of the window. A moment after, Thénardier was in the street; so soon as he touched the pavement, so soon as he felt himself out of danger, he was no longer wearied, chilled, or trembling; the terrible things he had passed through were dissipated like smoke, and all his strange and ferocious intellect was re-aroused, and found itself erect and free, ready to march onward. The first remark this man made was:

"Well, whom are we going to eat?"

It is unnecessary to explain the meaning of this frightfully transparent sentence, which signifies at once killing, assassinating, and robbing. The real meaning of "to eat" is "to devour."

"We must get into hiding," said Brujon. "We will understand each other in three words, and then separate at once. There was an affair that seemed good in the Rue Plumet, a deserted street, an isolated house, old rust-eaten railings looking on a garden, and lone women."

"Well, why not try it?" Thénardier asked.

"Your daughter Eponine went to look at the thing," Babet answered.

"And gave Magnon a biscuit," Brujon added; "there's nothing to be done there."

"The girl's no fool," said Thénardier, "still, we must see."

"Yes, yes," Brujon remarked, "we must see."

Not one of the men seemed to notice Gavroche, who, during this colloquy, was sitting on one of the posts; he waited some minutes, perhaps in the hope that his father would turn to him, and then put on his shoes again, saying:

"Is it all over? you men don't want me any more, I



suppose, as I've got you out of the scrape? I'm off, for I must go and wake my brats."

And he went off. The five men left the enclosure in turn. When Gavroche had disappeared round the corner of the Rue des Ballets, Babet took Thénardier on one side.

"Did you notice that brat?" he asked him.

"What brat?"

"The one who climbed up the wall and handed you the rope."

"Not particularly."

"Well, I don't know, but I fancy it's your son."

"Nonsense," said Thénardier; "do you think so?"

## CHAPTER LXXXIX.

THE reader will have understood that Eponine, on recognising through the railings the inhabitant of the house in the Rue Plumet, to which Magnon sent her, began by keeping the bandits aloof from the house, then led Marius to it, and that after several days of ecstasy before the railings, Marius, drawn by that force which attracts iron to the magnet, and the lover toward the stones of the house in which she whom he loves resides, had eventually entered Cosette's garden, as Romeo did Juliet's. It had even been an easier task for him than for Romeo; for Romeo was obliged to scale a wall, while Marius had only to move one of the bars of the decrepit railing loose in its rusty setting, like the teeth of old people. As Marius was thin, he easily passed through. As there never was anybody in the street, and as Marius never entered the garden save at night, he ran no risk of being seen. From that blessed and holy hour when a kiss affianced these two souls, Marius went to the garden every night. If, at this moment of her life, Cosette had fallen in love with an unscrupulous libertine, she would have been lost, for there are generous natures that surrender themselves, and Cosette was one of them. One of the magnanimities of a woman is to yield, and love, at that elevation where it is absolute, is complicated by a certain celestial blindness of modesty. But what dangers you incur, ye noble souls! you often give the heart and we take the body: your heart is left you, and you look at it in the darkness with a shudder. Love has no middle term: it

either saves or destroys, and this dilemma is the whole of human destiny. No fatality offers this dilemma of ruin or salvation more inexorably than does love, for love is life, if it be not death : it is a cradle, but also a coffin. God willed it that the love which Cosette came across was one of those loves which save. So long as the month of May of that year, 1832, lasted, there were every night in this poor untrimmed garden, and under this thicket, which daily became more fragrant and more thick, two beings composed of all the chastities and all the innocences, overflowing with all the felicities of heaven, nearer to the archangels than to man, pure, honest, intoxicated, and radiant, and who shone for each other in the darkness. It seemed to Cosette as if Marius had a crown, and to Marius as if Cosette had a halo. They touched each other, they looked at each other, they took each other by the hand, they drew close to each other ; but there was a distance which they never crossed. Not that they respected it, but they were ignorant of it. Marius felt a barrier in Cosette's purity, and Cosette felt a support in the loyalty of Marius. The first kiss had also been the last : since then Marius had never gone beyond touching Cosette's hand or neck-handkerchief or a curl with his lips. Cosette was to him a perfume, and not a woman, and he inhaled her. She refused nothing, and he asked for nothing : Cosette was happy and Marius satisfied. They lived in that ravishing state which might be called the bewilderment of a soul by a soul ; it was the ineffable first embrace of two virginities in the ideal, two swans meeting on the Jungfrau. At this hour of love, the hour when voluptuousness is absolutely silenced by the omnipotence of ecstasy, Marius, the pure and seraphic Marius, would have sooner been able to go home with a street-walker than raise Cosette's gown as high as her ankle. Once, in the moonlight, Cosette stooped to pick up something on the ground, and her dress opened and displayed her neck. Marius turned his eyes away.

What passed between these two lovers ? Nothing. They adored each other. Said Cosette to Marius :

"Do you know that my name is Euphrasie ?"

"Euphrasie ? no, it is Cosette."

"Où ! Cosette is an ugly name, which was given me when I was little, but my real name is Euphrasie. Don't you like that name ?"



"Yes, but Cosette is not ugly."

"Do you like it better than Euphrasie?"

"Well—yes."

"In that case, I like it better too. That is true, Cosette is pretty. Call me Cosette."

Another time she looked at him intently, and exclaimed :

"You are handsome, sir, you are good-looking, you have wit, you are not at all stupid, you are much more learned than I, but I challenge you with, 'I love you.'"

And Marius fancied that he heard a strophe sung by a star. Or else she gave him a little tap, when he coughed, and said :

"Do not cough, sir, I do not allow anybody to cough in my house without permission. It is very wrong to cough and frighten me. I wish you to be in good health, because if you were not I should be very unhappy. What will you have me do for you?"

And this was simply divine.

Once Marius said to Cosette :

"Just fancy, I supposed for a while that your name was Ursula."

This made them laugh the whole evening. In the middle of another conversation he happened to exclaim :

"Oh! one day at the Luxembourg I felt disposed to settle an invalid!"

But he stopped short, and did not complete the sentence, for he would have been obliged to allude to Cosette's garter, and that was impossible. There was a strange feeling connected with the flesh, before which this immense innocent love recoiled with a sort of holy terror. Marius imagined life with Cosette like this, without anything else; to come every evening to the Rue Plumet, remove the old complacent bar of the President's railings, sit down elbow to elbow on this bench, look through the trees at the scintillation of the commencing night, bring the fold in his trouser-knee into cohabitation with Cosette's ample skirts, to caress her thumb-nail, and to inhale the same flower in turn for ever and indefinitely. During this time the clouds passed over their heads. Each time the wind blows it carries off more of a man's thoughts than of clouds from the sky. We cannot affirm that this chaste, almost stern love was absolutely without gallantry. "Paying compliments" to her whom we love is the first way of giving caresses and an attempted semi-boldness. A compliment is something

like a kiss through a veil, and pleasure puts its sweet point upon it, while concealing itself.

"Oh!" Marius muttered, "how lovely you are! I dare not look at you; that is why I stare at you. You are a grace. I know not what is the matter with me. The hem of your dress, where the end of your slipper passes through, upsets me. And then, what an enchanting light when your thoughts become visible, for your reason astonishes me, and you appear to me at times to be a dream. Speak, I am listening to you, and admiring you. Oh, Cosette, how strange and charming it is! I am really mad. You are adorable, mademoiselle. I study your feet with the microscope and your soul with the telescope."

And Cosette made answer:

"And I love you a little more through all the time which has passed since this morning."

They idolised each other. The permanent and the immutable exist; a couple love, they laugh, they make little pouts with their lips, they intertwine their fingers, and that does not prevent eternity. Two lovers conceal themselves in a garden in the twilight, in the invisible, with the birds and the roses, they fascinate each other in the darkness with their souls which they place in their eyes, they mutter, they whisper, and during this period immense constellations of planets fill infinity. Cosette and Marius lived vaguely in the intoxication of their madness, and they did not notice the cholera which was decimating Paris in that very month. They had made as many confessions to each other as they could, but they had not extended very far beyond their names. Marius had told Cosette that he was an orphan, Pontmercy by name, a barrister by profession, and gaining a livelihood by writing things for publishers; that his father was a colonel, a hero, and he, Marius, had quarrelled with his grandfather who was very rich. He also incidentally remarked that he was a baron, but this did not produce much effect on Cosette. Marius a baron? she did not understand it, and did not know what the word meant; Marius was Marius to her. For her part, she confided to him that she had been educated at the convent of the Little Picpus, that her mother was dead, like his, that her father's name was Fauchelevent, that he was very good and gave a great deal to the poor, but was himself poor, and deprived himself of everything, while depriving her of nothing. Strange to say, in the species of symphony which Marius



had lived in since he found Cosette again, the past, even the most recent, had become so confused and distant to him that what Cosette told him completely satisfied him. He did not even dream of talking to her about the nocturnal adventure in the garret, the Thénardiens, the burning, and the strange attitude and singular flight of her father. Marius momentarily forgot all this ; he did not know at night what he had done in the morning, where he had breakfasted or who had spoken to him ; he had a song in his ears which rendered him deaf to every other thought, and he only existed during the hours when he saw Cosette. As he was in heaven at that time, it was perfectly simple that he should forget the earth. Both of them bore languidly the undefinable weight of immaterial joys ; that is the way in which those somnambulists, called lovers, live.

Jean Valjean suspected nothing ; for Cosette, a little less dreamy than Marius, was gay, and that sufficed to render Jean Valjean happy. Cosette's thoughts, her tender preoccupations, and the image of Marius which filled her soul, removed none of the incomparable purity of her splendid, chaste, and smiling forehead. She was at the age when the virgin wears her love as the angel wears its lily. Jean Valjean was, therefore, happy ; and, besides, when two lovers understand each other, things always go well, and any third party who might trouble their love is kept in a perfect state of blindness by a small number of precautions, which are always the same with all lovers. Hence Cosette never made any objections ; if he wished to take a walk, very good, my little papa, and if he stayed at home, very good, and if he wished to spend the evening with Cosette, she was enchanted. As he always went to his outhouse at ten o'clock at night, on those occasions Marius did not reach the garden till after that hour, when he heard from the street Cosette opening the door. We need hardly say that Marius was never visible by day, and Jean Valjean did not even remember that Marius existed. One morning, however, he happened to say to Cosette, "Why, the back of your dress is all white !" On the previous evening Marius, in a transport, had pressed Cosette against the wall. Old Toussaint, who went to bed at an early hour, only thought of sleeping so soon as her work was finished, and was ignorant of everything, like Jean Valjean.

Marius never set foot in the house when he was with Cosette ; they concealed themselves in a niche near the

steps, so as not to be seen or heard from the street, and sat there, often contenting themselves with the sole conversation of pressing hands twenty times a minute, and gazing at the branches of the trees. At such moments, had a thunderbolt fallen within thirty feet of them, they would not have noticed it, so profoundly was the reverie of the one absorbed and plunged in the reverie of the other. It was a limpid purity, and the houses were all white, and nearly all alike. This genus of love is a collection of lily leaves and doves' feathers. The whole garden was between them and the street, and each time that Marius came in and out he carefully restored the bar of the railings, so that no disarrangement was visible. He went away generally at midnight, and returned to Courfeyrac's lodgings. Courfeyrac used to rally him on the growing irregularity of his habits.

Various complications, however, were approaching. One evening Marius was going to the rendezvous along the Boulevard des Invalides; he was walking as usual with his head down, and as he was turning the corner of the Rue Plumet, he heard some one say close to him:

"Good-evening, Monsieur Marius."

He raised his head, and recognised Eponine. This produced a singular effect: he had not once thought of this girl since the day when she led him to the Rue Plumet; he had not seen her again, and she had entirely left his mind. He had only motives to be grateful to her, he owed to her his present happiness, and yet it annoyed him to meet her. It is an error to believe that passion, when it is happy and pure, leads a man to a state of perfection; it leads him simply, as we have shown, to a state of forgetfulness. In this situation, man forgets to be wicked, but he also forgets to be good, and gratitude, duty, and essential and material recollections, fade away. At any other time Marius would have felt very differently toward Eponine, but, absorbed by Cosette, he had not very clearly comprehended that this Eponine was Eponine Thénardier, and that she bore a name written in his father's will—that name to which he would have so ardently devoted himself a few months previously. We show Marius as he was. His father himself disappeared somewhat from his mind beneath the splendour of his love. Hence he replied with some embarrassment:

"Ah, is it you, Eponine?"

"Why do you treat me so coldly? Have I done you any injury?"



"No," he answered.

Certainly he had no fault to find with her; far from it. Still, he felt that he could not but say "you" to Eponine, now that he said "thou" to Cosette. As he remained silent, she exclaimed:

"Tell me——"

Then she stopped, and it seemed as if words failed this creature, who was formerly so impudent and bold. She tried to smile and could not, so continued:

"Well——"

Then she was silent again, and looked down on the ground.

"Good-evening, Monsieur Marius," she abruptly said, and went away.

## CHAPTER XC.

THE next day—it was June 3rd, 1832, a date to which we draw attention owing to the grave events which were at that moment hanging over the horizon of Paris in the state of lightning-charged clouds—Marius at nightfall was following the same road as on the previous evening, with the same ravishing thoughts in his heart, when he saw between the boulevard trees Eponine coming toward him. Two days running,—that was too much; so he sharply turned back, changed his course, and went to the Rue Plumet by the Rue Monsieur. This caused Eponine to follow him as far as the Rue Plumet, a thing she had never done before: hitherto she had contented herself with watching him as he passed along the boulevard, without attempting to meet him: last evening was the first time that she ventured to address him. Eponine followed him, then, without his suspecting it: she saw him move the railing-bar aside and step into the garden.

"Hilloh!" she said, "he enters the house."

She went up to the railing, felt the bars in turn, and easily distinguished the one which Marius had removed. She sat down on the stone work of the railing, close to the bar, as if she were guarding it. It was exactly at the spot where the railings joined the next wall, and there was there a dark corner, in which Eponine entirely disappeared. She remained thus for more than an hour without stirring or breathing, absorbed in thought. About ten o'clock at night, one of the two or three passers along the Rue

Plumet, an old belated citizen, who was hurrying along the deserted and ill-famed street, while passing the railing, heard a dull menacing voice saying :

"I am not surprised now that he comes every evening."

The passer-by looked around him, saw nobody, did not dare to peer into this dark corner, and felt horribly alarmed. He redoubled his speed, and was quite right in doing so, for in a few minutes six men, who were walking separately, and at some distance from each other, under the walls, and who might have been taken for a drunken patrol, entered the Rue Plumet: the first who reached the railings stopped and waited for the rest, and a second after, all six were together, and began talking in whispered slang :

"It's here," said one of them.

"Is there a dog in the garden?" another asked.

"I don't know. In any case I have brought a ball which we will make it swallow."

"Have you got some mastic to break a pane?"

"Yes."

"The railings are old," remarked the fifth man, who seemed to have the voice of a ventriloquist.

"All the better," said the second speaker, "it will make no noise when sawn, and won't be so hard to cut through."

The sixth, who had not yet opened his mouth, began examining the railings as Eponine had done an hour ago, and thus reached the bar which Marius had unfastened. Just as he was about to seize this bar, a hand suddenly emerging from the darkness, clutched his arm; he felt himself roughly thrust back, and a hoarse voice whispered to him, "There's a cab (a dog)." At the same time he saw a pale girl standing in front of him. The man had that emotion which is always produced by things unexpected; his hair stood hideously on end. Nothing is more formidable to look at than startled wild beasts. He fell back and stammered.

"Who is this she-devil?"

"Your daughter."

It was, in truth, Eponine speaking to Thénardier. On the appearance of Eponine, the other five men, that is to say, Claquesous, Gueulemer, Babet, Montparnasse, and Brujon, approached noiselessly, without hurry or saying a word, but with the sinister slowness peculiar to these men of the night. Some hideous tools could be distinguished in their hands.

"Well, what are you doing here? what do you want? are you mad?" Thénardier exclaimed, as far as is possible



to exclaim in a whisper. "Have you come to prevent us from working?"

Eponine burst into a laugh and leapt on his neck. "I am here, my dear little pappy, because I am here; are not people allowed to sit down in copings at present? it is you who oughtn't to be here; and what have you come to do, since it is a biscuit? I told Magnon so, there is nothing to be done here. But embrace me, my dear pappy, it is such a time since I saw you. You are out, then!"

Thénardier tried to free himself from Eponine's arms, and growled:

"There, there, you have embraced me. Yes, I am out, and not in. Now, be off."

But Eponine did not lose her hold, and redoubled her caresses.

"My dear pappy, how ever did you manage? You must have been very clever to get out of that scrape, so tell me all about it. And where is mamma? give me some news of her."

Thénardier answered:

"She's all right. I don't know; leave me and be off, I tell you."

"I do not exactly want to go off," Eponine said with the pout of a spoiled child; "you send me away, though I haven't seen you now for four months, and I have scarce had time to embrace you."

And she caught her father again round the neck.

"Oh, come, this is a bore," said Babet.

"Make haste," said Gueulemer, "the police may pass."

Eponine turned to the five bandits:

"Why, that's Monsieur Brujon. Good-evening, Monsieur Babet; good-evening, Monsieur Claquesous. What, don't you know me, Monsieur Gueulemer? How are you, Montparnasse?"

"Yes, they know you," said Thénardier; "but now good-night, and be off; leave us alone."

"It is the hour of the foxes, and not of the chickens," said Montparnasse.

"Don't you see that we have work here?" Babet added.

Eponine took Montparnasse by the hand. "Mind," he said, "you will cut yourself, for I have an open knife."

"My dear Montparnasse," Eponine replied very gently, "confidence ought to be placed in people, and I am my father's daughter, perhaps. Monsieur Babet, Monsieur Gueulemer, I was ordered to examine into this affair."

It is remarkable that Eponine did not speak slang ; ever since she had known Marius that frightful language had become impossible to her. She pressed Gueulemer's great coarse fingers in her little bony hand, which was as weak as that of a skeleton, and continued : " You know very well that I am no fool, and people generally believe me. I have done you a service now and then ; well, I have made inquiries, and you would run a needless risk. I swear to you that there is nothing to be done in this house."

" There are lone women," said Gueulemer.

" No, they have moved away."

" Well, the candles haven't," Babet remarked, and he pointed over the trees to a light which was moving about the garret ; it was Toussaint who was up late in order to hang up some linen to dry. Eponine made a final effort.

" Well," she said, " they are very poor people, and there isn't a penny-piece in the house."

" Go to the devil," cried Thénardier ; " when we have turned the house topsy-turvy, and placed the cellar at top and the attics at the bottom, we will tell you what there is inside, and whether they are francs, sous or liards."

And he thrust her away that he might pass.

" You shall not enter. You are six, but what do I care for that ? You are men and I am a woman. You won't frighten me, I can tell you, and you shall not enter this house, because it does not please me. If you come nearer I bark ; I told you there was a dog, and I am it. I do not care a farthing for you, so go your way, for you annoy me ! Go where you like, but don't come here, for I forbid it. Come on as you like, you have your knives, and I have my feet."

She advanced a step toward the bandits and said, with the same frightful laugh :

" Confound it ! I'm not frightened. This summer I shall be hungry, and this winter I shall be cold. What asses these men must be to think they can frighten a girl ! Afraid of what ? You have got dolls of mistresses who crawl under the bed when you talk big, but I am afraid of nothing !"

She fixed her eye on Thénardier, and said,— " Not even of you, father."

Then she continued, as she turned her spectral, blood-shot eyeballs on each of the bandits in turn :

" What do I care whether I am picked up to-morrow on



the pavement of the Rue Plumet stabbed by my father, or am found within a year in the nets of St. Cloud or on Swan's Island, among old rotting corks and drowned dogs !”

She was compelled to break off, for she was attacked by a dry cough, and her breath came from her weak, narrow chest like the death-rattle.

She continued :

“ I have only to cry out and people will come, patatras. You are six, but I am all Paris.”

Thénardier moved a step toward her.

“ Don't come near me,” she cried.

He stopped, and said gently :

“ Well, no, I will not approach you, but do not talk so loud. Do you wish to prevent us from working, my daughter ? And yet we must earn a livelihood. Do you no longer feel any affection for your father ? ”

“ You bore me,” said Eponine.

“ Still we must live, we must eat——”

“ Rot of hunger.”

This said, she sat down on the coping of the railings, singing to herself.

She had her elbow on her knee, and her chin in her hand, and she balanced her foot with a careless air. Her ragged gown displayed her thin shoulder-blades, and the neighbouring lamp lit up her profile and attitude. Nothing more resolute or more surprising could well be imagined. The six burglars, amazed and savage at being held in check by a girl, went under the shadow of the lamp and held counsel, with humiliated and furious shrugs of their shoulders. She, however, looked at them with a peaceful yet stern air.

“ There's something the matter with her,” said Babet, “ some reason for it. Can she be in love with the dog ? and, yet, it's a pity to miss the affair. There are two women who live alone, an old cove who lives in a yard, and very decent curtains at the windows. The old swell must be a Jew, and I consider the affair a good one.”

“ Well, do you fellows go in,” Montparnasse exclaimed, “ and do the trick. I will remain here with the girl, and if she stirs——”

He let the knife which he held in his hand glisten in the lamplight. Thénardier did not say a word, and seemed ready for anything they pleased. Brujon, who was a bit of

an oracle, and who, as we know, "put up the job," had not yet spoken, and seemed thoughtful. He was supposed to recoil at nothing, and it was notorious that he had plundered a police-office through sheer bravado. Moreover, he wrote verses and songs, which gave him a great authority. Babet questioned him.

"Have you nothing to say, Brujon?"

Brujon remained silent for a moment, then tossed his head in several different ways, and at length decided on speaking.

"Look here. I saw this morning two sparrows fighting, and to-night I stumble over a quarrelsome woman: all that is bad, so let us be off."

They went away. Eponine, who did not take her eyes off them, saw them return by the road along which they had come. She rose and crawled after them, along the walls and the houses. She followed them thus along the boulevard; there they separated, and she saw the six men bury themselves in the darkness, where they seemed to fade away.

While all this was going on, Marius was by Cosette's side. The sky had never been more star-spangled and more charming, the trees more rustling, or the smell of the grass more penetrating; never had the birds fallen asleep beneath the frondage with a softer noise; never had the universal harmonies of serenity responded better to the internal music of the soul; never had Marius been more enamoured, happier, or in greater ecstasy. But he had found Cosette sad, she had been crying, and her eyes were red. It was the first cloud in this admirable dream. Marius' first remark was:

"What is the matter with you?"

And she replied:

"I will tell you."

Then she sat down on the bench near the house, and while he took his seat, all trembling, by her side, she continued:

"My father told me this morning to hold myself in readiness, for he had business to attend to, and we were probably going away."

Marius shuddered from head to foot. When we reach the end of life, death signifies a departure, but at the beginning, departure means death. For six weeks past Marius had slowly and gradually taken possession of Cosette; it was a perfectly ideal, but profound possession.



Marius possessed Cosette in the way that minds possess ; but he enveloped her with his entire soul, and jealously seized her with an incredible conviction. He possessed her touch, her breath, her perfume, the deep flash of her blue eyes, the softness of her skin when he touched her hand, the charming mark which she had on her neck, and all her thoughts. They had agreed never to sleep without dreaming of each other, and had kept their word. He, therefore, possessed all Cosette's dreams. Marius felt Cosette live in him ; to have Cosette, to possess Cosette, was to him not very different from breathing. It was in the midst of this faith, this intoxication, this virgin, extraordinary, and absolute possession that the words " We are going away " suddenly fell on him, and the stern voice of reality shouted to him, " Cosette is not thine " Marius awoke. For six weeks, as we said, he had been living out of life, and the word " depart " made him roughly re-enter it. He could not find a word to say, and Cosette merely noticed that his hand was very cold. She said to him in her turn.

" What is the matter with you ? "

He answered, in so low a voice that Cosette could scarce hear him :

" I do not understand what you said. "

She continued :

" This morning my father told me to prepare my clothes and hold myself ready, that he would give me his linen to put in a portmanteau, that he was obliged to make a journey, that we were going away, that we must have a large trunk for myself and a small one for him, to get all this ready within a week, and that we should probably go to England. "

" Why, it is monstrous ! " Marius exclaimed.

It is certain that, at this moment, in Marius' mind, no abuse of power, no violence, no abomination of the most prodigious tyrants, no deed of Busiris, Tiberius, or Henry VIII., equalled in ferocity this one,—M. Fauchelevent taking his daughter to England because he had business to attend to. He asked, in a faint voice :

" And when will you start ? "

" He did not say when. "

" And when will you return ? "

" He did not tell me. "

And Marius rose and said coldly :

" Will you go, Cosette ? "

Cosette turned to him, her beautiful eyes full of agony, and answered, with a species of wildness :

"Where?"

"To England; will you go?"

"What can I do?" she said, clasping her hands.

"Then you will go?"

"If my father goes."

"So you are determined to go?"

Cosette seized Marius' hand, and pressed it as sole reply.

"Very well," said Marius, "in that case I shall go elsewhere."

Cosette felt the meaning of this remark even more than she comprehended it; she turned so pale that her face became white in the darkness, and stammered :

"What do you mean?"

Marius looked at her, then slowly raised his eyes to heaven, and replied :

"Nothing."

When he looked down again he saw Cosette smiling at him; the smile of the woman whom we love has a brilliancy which is visible at night.

"How foolish we are! Marius, I have an idea."

"What is it?"

"Follow us if we go away! I will tell you whither! and you can join me where I am."

Marius was now a thoroughly wide-awake man, and had fallen back into reality; hence he cried to Cosette :

"Go with you! are you mad? why, it would require money, and I have none! Go to England! why, I already owe more than ten louis to Courleyrac, one of my friends, whom you do not know! I have an old hat, which is not worth three francs, a coat with buttons missing in front, my shirt is all torn, my boots let in water, I am out at elbows, but I have not thought of it for six weeks, and did not tell you. Cosette, I am a wretch; you only see me at night and give me your love: were you to see me by day you would give me a halfpenny. Go to England! Why I have not enough to pay for the passport!"

He threw himself against a tree, with his arms over his head, and his forehead pressed to the bark, neither feeling the wood that grazed his skin nor the fever which spotted his temples, motionless and ready to fall, like the statue of despair. He remained for a long time in this state--people would remain for an eternity in such abysses. At length



he turned and heard behind a little stifled, soft, and sad sound ; it was Cosette sobbing ; she had been crying for more than two hours by the side of Marius, who was reflecting. He went up to her, fell on his knees, seized her foot, which peeped out from under her skirt, and kissed it. She let him do so in silence, for there are moments when a woman accepts, like a sombre and resigned duty, the worship of love.

"Do not weep," he said.

She continued :

"But I am, perhaps, going away, and you are not able to come with me."

He said, "Do you love me?"

She replied by sobbing that Paradisaic word, which is never more charming than through tears, "I adore you."

He pursued, with an accent which was an inexpressible caress :

"Do not weep. Will you do so much for me as to check your tears?"

"Do you love me?" she said.

He took her hand.

"Cosette, I have never pledged my word of honour to any one, because it frightens me, and I feel that my father is by the side of it. Well, I pledge you my most sacred word of honour that if you go away I shall die."

There was in the accent with which he uttered these words such a solemn and calm melancholy that Cosette trembled, and she felt that chill which is produced by the passing of a sombre and true thing. In her terror she ceased to weep.

"Now listen to me," he said ; "do not expect me to-morrow."

"Why not?"

"Do not expect me till the day after."

"Oh, why?"

"You will see."

"A day without your coming !—oh, it is impossible."

"Let us sacrifice one day to have, perhaps, a whole life."

And Marius added in a low voice and aside : "He is a man who makes no change in his habits, and he never received anybody before the evening."

"What man are you talking about?" Cosette asked.

"I ? I did not say anything."

"What do you hope for, then?"

"Wait till the day after to-morrow."

"Do you desire it?"

"Yes, Cosette."

He took her head between his two hands, as she stood on tiptoe to reach him, and tried to see his hopes in his eyes. Marius added :

"By the bye, you must know my address, for something might happen ; I live with my friend Courfeyrac, at No. 16 Rue de la Verrerie."

He felt in his pockets, took out a knife, and scratched the address on the plaster of the wall. In the meanwhile, Cosette had begun looking in his eyes again.

"Tell me your thought, Marius, for you have one. Tell it to me. Oh, tell it to me, so that I may pass a good night."

"My thought is this ; it is impossible that God can wish to separate us. Expect me the day after to-morrow."

"What shall I do till then?" Cosette said. "You are in the world, and come and go ; how happy men are ! but I shall remain all alone. Oh, I shall be so sad ! what will you do to -morrow night, tell me ?"

"I shall try something."

"In that case I shall pray to Heaven, and think of you, so that you may succeed. I will not question you any more, as you do not wish it, and you are my master. I will spend my evening in singing the song from *Euryanthe*, of which you are so fond, and which you heard one night under my shutters. But you will come early the next evening, and I shall expect you at nine o'clock exactly. I warn you. Oh, good heavens ! how sad it is that the days are so long ! You hear ; I shall be in the garden as it is striking nine."

"And I too."

And without saying a word, moved by the same thought, carried away by those electric currents which place two lovers in continual communication, both intoxicated with voluptuousness, even in their grief, fell into each other's arms without noticing that their lips were joined together, while their upraised eyes, overflowing with ecstasy and full of tears, contemplated the stars. When Marius left, the street was deserted, for it was the moment when Eponine followed the bandits into the boulevard. While Marius dreamed with his head leaning against a tree an idea had crossed his mind, an idea, alas ! which he himself considered mad and impossible. He had formed a desperate resolution.



## CHAPTER XCI.

FATHER GILLENORMAND at this period had just passed his ninety-first birthday, and still lived with his daughter at No. 6 Rue des Filles de Calvaire, in the old house, which was his own property. He was, it will be remembered, one of those antique old men whom age falls on without bending them, and whom even sorrow cannot bow. Still, for some time past, his daughter had said, "My father is breaking." He no longer boxed the ears of the maid-servants, or banged so violently the staircase railing when Basque kept him waiting. The Revolution of July had not exasperated him for more than six months, and he had seen almost with tranquillity in the *Moniteur* this association of words, M. Humblot-Conté, Peer of France. The truth is, that the old man was filled with grief; he did not bend, he did not surrender, for that was not possible, either with his moral or physical nature; but he felt himself failing inwardly. For four years he had been awaiting Marius, with the conviction that the cursed young scamp would ring his bell some day, and now he had begun to say to himself that Marius might remain away a little too long. It was not death that was insupportable to him, but the idea that perhaps he might not see Marius again. This idea had never occurred to him until this day, and at present it rose before him constantly, and chilled him to death. Absence, as ever happens in natural and true feelings, had only heightened the grandfather's love for the ungrateful boy who had gone away. M. Gillenormand was, or fancied himself, utterly incapable of taking a step toward his grandson: "I would rot first," he said to himself. He did not think himself at all in the wrong, but he thought of Marius only with profound tenderness, and the dumb despair of an old man who is going down into the valley of the shadows. He was beginning to lose his teeth, which added to his sorrow. M. Gillenormand, without confessing it to himself, however, for he would have been furious and ashamed of it, had never loved a mistress as he loved Marius. He had hung up in his room, as the first thing he might see on awaking, an old portrait of his other daughter, the one who was dead, Madame de Pontmercy, taken when she was eighteen. He incessantly regarded this portrait, and happened to say one day, while gazing at it:

"I can notice a likeness."

"To my sister?" Mlle Gillenormand remarked; "oh, certainly."

The old man added, "And to him too."

When he was once sitting, with his knees against each other and his eyes almost closed, in a melancholy posture, his daughter ventured to say to him:

"Father, are you still so furious against——?" She stopped, not daring to go further.

"Against whom?" he asked.

"That poor Marius."

He raised his old head, laid his thin wrinkled fist on the table, and cried, in his loudest and most irritated accent:

"Poor Marius, you say! that gentleman is a scoundrel, a scamp, a little vain ingrate, without heart or soul, a proud and wicked man!"

And he turned away, so that his daughter might not see a tear which he had in his eyes. Three days later he interrupted a silence which had lasted four hours to say to his daughter gruffly:

"I have had the honour of begging Mademoiselle Gillenormand never to mention his name to me."

Mlle Gillenormand gave up all attempts, and formed this profound diagnosis: "My father was never very fond of me since after her folly. It is clear that he detests Marius."

On the evening of June 4th, which did not prevent Father Gillenormand from having an excellent fire in his chimney, he had dismissed his daughter, who was sewing in the adjoining room. He was alone in his apartment with the pastoral hangings with his feet on the andirons, half enveloped in his nine-leaved Coromandel screen, sitting at a table on which two candles burned under a green shade, swallowed up in his needleworked easy-chair, and holding a book in his hand, which he was not reading. Father Gillenormand was thinking of Marius bitterly and lovingly, and, as usual, bitterness gained the upper hand. His savage tenderness always ended by boiling over and turning into indignation, and he was at the stage when a man seeks to make up his mind and accept that which is to be. He was explaining to himself that there was no longer any reason for Marius' return, that if he had meant to come home he would have done so long before, and all idea of it must be given up. He tried to form the idea that it was all



over, and that he should die without seeing that "gentleman" again. But his whole nature revolted, and his old paternity could not consent. "What," he said, and it was his mournful burthen, "he will not come back!" and his old bald head fell on his chest, and he vaguely fixed a lamentable and irritated glance upon the ashes on his hearth. In the depth of this reverie his old servant Basque came in and asked:

"Can you receive M. Marius, sir?"

The old man sat up, livid, and like a corpse which is roused by a galvanic shock. All his blood flowed to his heart, and he stammered:

"M. Marius! who?"

"I do not know," Basque replied, intimidated and disconcerted by his master's air, "for I did not see him. It was Nicolette who said to me just now, 'There is a young man here, say it is M. Marius.'"

Father Gillenormand stammered in a low voice, "Show him in."

And he remained in the same attitude with hanging head and eye fixed on the door. It opened, and a young man appeared—it was Marius, who stopped in the doorway as if waiting to be asked in. His almost wretched clothes could not be seen in the obscurity produced by the shade, and only his calm, grave, but strangely sorrowful face could be distinguished. Father Gillenormand, as if stunned by stupor and joy, remained for a few minutes, seeing nothing but a brilliancy, as when an apparition rises before us. He was ready to faint; he perceived Marius through a mist. It was really he, it was really Marius! At length, after four years! He took him in entirely, so to speak, at a glance, and found him handsome, noble, distinguished, grown, a thorough man, with a proper attitude and a charming air. He felt inclined to open his arms and call the boy to him, his entrails were swelled with ravishment, affectionate words welled up and overflowed his bosom. At length all this tenderness burst forth and reached his lips, and through the contrast which formed the basis of his character a harshness issued from it. He said roughly:

"What do you want here?"

Marius replied with an embarrassed air:

"Sir——"

Monsieur Gillenormand would have liked for Marius to throw himself into his arms, and he was dissatisfied both







with Marius and himself. He felt that he was rough and Marius cold, and it was an insupportable and irritating anxiety to the old gentleman to feel himself so tender and imploring within, and unable to be otherwise than harsh externally. His bitterness returned, and he abruptly interrupted Marius.

"In that case why do you come?"

The "in that case" meant "if you have not come to embrace me." Marius gazed at his ancestor's marble face.

"Sir——"

The old gentleman resumed in a stern voice:

"Have you come to ask my pardon? have you recognised your error?"

He believed that he was putting Marius on the right track, and that "the boy" was going to give way. Marius trembled, for it was a disavowal of his father that was asked of him, and he lowered his eyes and replied, "No, sir."

"Well, in that case," the old man exclaimed impetuously, and with a sharp sorrow full of anger, "what is it you want of me?"

Marius clasped his hands, advanced a step, and said, in a weak, trembling voice:

"Take pity on me, sir."

This word moved M. Gillenormand; had it come sooner it would have softened him, but it came too late. The old gentleman rose, and rested both hands on his cane; his lips were white, his forehead vacillated, but his lofty stature towered over the stooping Marius.

"Pity on you, sir! the young man asks pity of the old man of ninety-one! You are entering life, and I am leaving it; you go to the play, to balls, to the coffee-house, the billiard-table; you are witty, you please women, you are a pretty fellow, while I spit on my logs in the middle of summer; you are rich with the only wealth there is, while I have all the poverty of old age, infirmity, and isolation. You have your two-and-thirty teeth, a good stomach, a quick eye, strength, appetite, health, gaiety, a forest of black hair, while I have not even my white hair left. I have lost my teeth, I am losing my legs, I am losing my memory. Such is my state; you have a whole future before you, full of sunshine, while I am beginning to see nothing, as I have advanced so far into night. You are in love, that is a matter of course, while I am not beloved by a



soul in the world, and yet you ask me for pity ! By Jove, Molière forgot that. If that is the way in which you barristers jest at the palace of justice, I compliment you most sincerely upon it, for you are droll fellows."

And the octogenarian added, in a serious and wrathful voice :

"Well, what is it you want of me ?"

"I am aware, sir," said Marius, "that my presence here displeases you, but I have only come to ask one thing of you, and then I shall go away at once."

"You are a fool," the old man said ; "who told you to go away ?"

This was the translation of the tender words which he had at the bottom of his heart. "Ask my pardon, why don't you ? and throw your arms round my neck." M. Gillenormand felt that Marius was going to leave him in a few moments, that his bad reception offended him, and that his harshness expelled him ; he said all this to himself, and his grief was augmented by it ; as his grief immediately turned into passion and his harshness grew the greater. He had wished that Marius should understand, and Marius did not understand, which rendered the old gentleman furious. He continued :

"What ! you insulted me, your grandfather ; you left my house to go the Lord knows whither ; you broke your aunt's heart ; you went away to lead a bachelor's life, of course that's more convenient, to play the fop, come home at all hours, and amuse yourself ; you have given me no sign of life, you have incurred debts without even asking me to pay them, and at the end of four years you return to my house and have nothing more to say to me than that !"

This violent way of forcing the grandson into tenderness only produced silence on the part of Marius. M. Gillenormand folded his arms, a gesture which with him was peculiarly imperious, and bitterly addressed Marius :

"Let us come to an end. You have come to ask something of me, you say ! well, what is it ? speak."

"Sir," said Marius, with the look of a man who feels that he is going to fall over a precipice, "I have come to ask your permission to marry."

M. Gillenormand rang the bell, and Basque poked his head into the door.

"Send my daughter here."

A second later, the door opened again, and Mlle Gillenormand did not enter, but showed herself. Marius was standing silently, with drooping arms and the face of a criminal, while M. Gillenormand walked up and down the room. He turned to his daughter and said to her :

"It is nothing. This is M. Marius, wish him good-evening. This gentleman desires to marry; that will do. Be off."

The sound of the old man's sharp, hoarse voice announced a mighty fury raging within him. The aunt looked at Marius in terror, seemed scarce to recognise him, did not utter a syllable, and disappeared before her father's breath, like a straw before a hurricane. In the meanwhile M. Gillenormand had turned back, and was now leaning against the mantelpiece.

"You marry! at the age of one-and-twenty! you have settled all that, and have only a permission to ask, a mere formality! Sit down, sir. Well, you have had a revolution since I had the honour of seeing you last; the Jacobins had the best of it, and you are of course pleased; are you not a republican since you became a baron? those two things go famously together, and the republic is a sauce for the barony. Are you one of the decorated of July? did you give your small aid to take the Louvre, sir? Close by, in the Rue St Antoine, opposite the Rue des Nonaindières, there is a cannon-ball imbedded in the wall of a house three storeys up, with the inscription, July 28, 1830. Go and look at it, for it produces a famous effect. Ah! your friends do very pretty things! By the way, are they not erecting a fountain on the site of the Duc de Berry's monument? So you wish to marry? May I ask, without any indiscretion, who the lady is?"

He stopped, and before Marius had time to answer, he added violently :

"Ah! have you a profession, a fortune? how much do you earn by your trade as a lawyer?"

"Nothing," said Marius, with a sort of fierceness and almost stern resolution.

"Nothing? then you have only the twelve hundred livres which I allow you to live on?"

Marius made no reply, and M. Gillenormand continued :

"In that case, I presume that the young lady is wealthy?"

"Like myself."

"What? no dowry?"



"No."

"Any expectations?"

"I do not think so."

"Quite naked! and what is the father?"

"I do not know."

"And what is her name?"

"Mademoiselle Fauchelevent."

"Mademoiselle Fauchewhat?"

"Fauchelevent."

"Ptt!" said the old gentleman.

"Sir!" Marius exclaimed.

M. Gillenormand interrupted him, with the air of a man who is talking to himself.

"That is it, one-and-twenty, no profession, twelve hundred livres a year, and the Baroness Pontmercy will go and buy two sous' worth of parsley at the greengrocer's."

"Sir," Marius replied in the wildness of the last vanishing hope, "I implore you, I conjure you in Heaven's name, with clasped hands I throw myself at your feet,—sir, permit me to marry her!"

The old man burst into a sharp, melancholy laugh, through which he coughed and spoke:

"Ah, ah, ah! you said to yourself, 'I'll go and see that old periwig, that absurd ass! What a pity that I am not five-and-twenty yet, how I would send him a respectful summons! Old fool, you are too glad to see me, I feel inclined to marry Mademoiselle Lord-knows-who, the daughter of M. Lord-knows-what. She has no shoes, and I have no shirt, that matches; I am inclined to throw into the river my career, my youth, my future, my life, and take a plunge into wretchedness with a wife round my neck—that is my idea, and you must consent:' and the old fossil will consent. Go in, my lad, fasten your paving-stone round your neck, marry your Pousselevent, your Coupelevent,—never, sir, never!"

"Father——"

"Never!"

Marius lost all hope through the accent with which this "never" was pronounced. He crossed the room slowly, with hanging head, tottering, and more like a man that is dying than one who is going away. M. Gillenormand looked after him, and at the moment when the door opened and Marius was about to leave the room he took four strides with the senile vivacity of an impetuous and self-

willed old man, seized Marius by the collar, pulled him back energetically into the room, threw him into an easy-chair, and said :

"Tell me all about it."

The word "father" which had escaped from Marius' lips produced this revolution. Marius looked at M. Gillenormand haggardly, but his inflexible face expressed nought now but a rough and ineffable goodness. The ancestor had made way for the grandfather.

"Well, speak ; tell me of your love episodes, tell me all. Sapristi ! how stupid young men are !"

"My father !" Marius resumed.

The old gentleman's entire face was lit up with an indescribable radiance.

"Yes, that is it, call me father, and you'll see."

There was now something so gentle, so good, so open, and so paternal in this sharpness, that Marius, in this sudden passage from discouragement to hope, was, as it were, stunned and intoxicated. As he was seated near the table the light of the candles fell on his seedy attire, which Father Gillenormand studied with amazement.

"Well, father," said Marius.

"What," M. Gillenormand interrupted him, "have you really no money ? You are dressed like a thief."

He felt in a drawer and pulled out a purse, which he laid on the table.

"Here are one hundred louis to buy a hat with."

"My father," Marius continued, "my kind father. If you only knew how I love her ! You cannot imagine it. The first time I saw her was at the Luxembourg, where she came to walk. At the beginning I paid no great attention to her, and then I know not how it happened, but I fell in love with her. Oh ! how wretched it made me. I see her now every day at her own house, and her father knows nothing about it : just fancy, they are going away, we see each other at night in the garden, her father means to take her to England, and then I said to myself, 'I will go and see my grandfather and tell him about it.' I should go mad first, I should die, I should have a brain fever, I should throw myself into the water. I must marry her, or else I shall go mad. That is the whole truth, and I do not believe that I have forgotten anything. She lives in a garden with a railing to it, in the Rue Plumet : it is on the side of the Invalides."



Father Gillenormand was sitting, radiant with joy, by Marius' side : while listening and enjoying the sound of his voice he enjoyed at the same time a lengthened pinch of snuff. At the words Rue Plumet he broke off his sniffing, and allowed the rest of the snuff to fall on his knees.

"Rue Plumet ! did you say Rue Plumet ? only think ! Is there not a barrack down there ? oh yes, of course there is. Marius ! I think it very proper that a young man like you should be in love, for it becomes your age, and I would sooner have you in love than a Jacobin. I would rather know you caught by a petticoat, ay, by twenty petticoats, than by Monsieur de Robespierre. For my part, I do myself the justice of saying that, as regards sans-culottes, I never loved any but women. Pretty girls are pretty girls, hang it all ! and there is no harm in that. And so she receives you behind her father's back, does she ? that's all right, and I had affairs of the same sort, more than one. Do you know what a man does in such cases ? he does not regard the matter ferociously, he does not hurl himself into matrimony, or conclude with marriage and M. le Maire in his scarf. No, he is a sharp fellow, and a man of common sense. Glide, mortals, but do not marry. Such a young man goes to his grandfather, who is well inclined after all, and who has always a few rolls of louis in an old drawer, and he says to him, 'Grandpapa, that's how matters stand,' and grandpapa says, 'It is very simple, youth must enjoy itself, and old age be smashed up. I have been young and you will be old. All right, my lad, you will requite it to your grandson. Here are two hundred pistoles, go and amuse yourself, confound you !' that is the way in which the matter should be arranged ; a man does not marry, but that is no obstacle : do you understand ?"

Marius, petrified and incapable of uttering a word, shook his head in the negative. The old gentleman burst into a laugh, winked his aged eyelid, tapped him on the knee, looked at him between the eyes with a mysterious and radiant air, and said with the tenderest shrug of the shoulders possible :

"You goose ! make her your mistress !"

Marius turned pale ; he had understood nothing of what his grandfather had been saying. Nothing of all this could affect Cosette who was a lily, and the old gentleman was wandering. But this derogation had resulted in a sentence

which Marius understood, and which was a mortal insult to Cosette, and the words, "Make her your mistress," passed through the stern young man's heart like a sword-blade. He rose, picked up his hat which was on the ground, and walked to the door with a firm, assured step. Then he turned, gave his grandfather a low bow, drew himself up again, and said :

"Five years ago you outraged my father ; to-day you have outraged my wife. I have nothing more to ask of you, sir ; farewell !"

Father Gillenormand, who was stupefied, opened his mouth, stretched out his arms, strove to rise, but ere he was able to utter a word, the door had closed again, and Marius had disappeared . The old gentleman remained for a few minutes motionless, and as if thunder-struck, unable to speak or breathe, as though a garrotter's hand were compressing his throat. At length he tore himself out of his easy-chair, ran to the door as fast as a man can run at ninety-one, opened it, and cried

"Help ! help !"

His daughter appeared, and then his servants ; he went on with a lamentable rattle in his throat :

"Run after him ! catch him up ! how did I offend him ? he is mad and going away ! O Lord, O Lord ! this time he will not return."

He went to the window which looked on the street, opened it with his old trembling hands, bent half his body out of it, while Basque and Nicolette held his skirts, and cried :

"Marius ! Marius ! Marius ! Marius !"

But Marius could not hear him, for at this very moment he was turning the corner of the Rue St. Louis. The octogenarian raised his hands twice or thrice to his temples with an expression of agony, tottered back, and sank into an easy-chair, pulseless, voiceless, and tearless, shaking his head and moving his lips with a stupid air, and having nothing left in his eyes or heart but something deep and mournful, which resembled night.

That very day, about four in the afternoon, Jean Valjean was seated on one of the most solitary slopes of the Champ de Mars. Either through prudence, a desire to reflect, or simply in consequence of one of those insensible changes of habits which gradually introduce themselves into all existences he now went out very rarely with Cosette. He



had on his workman's jacket and gray canvas trousers, and his long peaked cap concealed his face. He was at present calm and happy by Cosette's side ; what had startled and troubled him for a while was dissipated ; but, during the last week or fortnight, anxieties of a fresh nature had sprung up. One day, while walking along the boulevard, he noticed Thénardier ; thanks to his disguise, Thénardier did not recognise him, but after that Jean Valjean saw him several times again, and now felt certain that Thénardier was prowling about the quarter. This was sufficient to make him form a grand resolution, for Thénardier present was every peril at once ; moreover, Paris was not quiet, and political troubles offered this inconvenience to any man who had something in his life to hide, that the police had become very restless and suspicious and, when trying to find a man like Pepin or Morey, might very easily discover a man like Jean Valjean. He, therefore, resolved to leave Paris, even France, and go to England ; he had warned Cosette, and hoped to be off within a week. He was sitting on the slope, revolving in his mind all sorts of thoughts,—Thénardier, the police, the journey, and the difficulty of obtaining a passport. From all these points of view he was anxious ; and lastly, an inexplicable fact, which had just struck him, and from which he was still hot, added to his alarm. On the morning of that very day he, the only person up in the house, and walking in the garden before Cosette's shutters were opened, suddenly perceived this line on the wall, probably scratched with a nail :

*16 Rue de la Verrerie.*

It was quite recent, the lines were white on the old black mortar, and a bed of nettles at the foot of the wall was powdered with fine fresh plaster. This had probably been inscribed during the night. What was it ? an address ? a signal for others, or a warning for himself ? In any case, it was evident that the secrecy of the garden was violated, and that strangers entered it. He remembered the strange incidents which had already alarmed the house, and his mind was at work on this subject ; but he was careful not to say a word to Cosette about the line written on the wall, for fear of alarming her. In the midst of his troubled thoughts he perceived, from a shadow which the sun threw, that some one was standing on the crest of the slope immediately behind him. He was just going to turn,

when a folded paper fell on his knees, as if a hand had thrown it over his head; he opened the paper, and read this word, written in large characters, and in pencil,—  
“REMOVE.”

Jean Valjean rose smartly, but there was no longer any one on the slope; he looked round him, and perceived a person, taller than a child and shorter than a man, dressed in a gray blouse and dust-coloured cotton-velvet trousers, bestriding the parapet, and slipping down into the moat of the Champ de Mars. Jean Valjean at once went home, full of thought.

Marius had left M. Gillenormand's house in a wretched state; he had gone in with very small hopes, and came out with an immense despair. He began walking about the streets, the resource of those who suffer, and he thought of nothing which he might have remembered. At two in the morning he went to Courfeyrac's lodging, and threw himself on his mattress full dressed: it was bright sunshine when he fell asleep, with that frightful oppressive sleep which allows ideas to come and go in the brain. When he awoke he saw Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Feuilly, and Combeferre, all ready to go out, and extremely busy. Courfeyrac said to him:

“Are you coming to General Lamarque's funeral?”

It seemed to him as if Courfeyrac were talking Chinese. He went out shortly after them, and put in his pockets the pistols which Javert had entrusted to him at the affair of February 3, and which still remained in his possession. They were still loaded, and it would be difficult to say what obscure notion he had in his brain when he took them up. The whole day he wandered about, without knowing where, it rained at times, but he did not perceive it; he bought for his dinner a halfpenny roll, put it in his pocket, and forgot it. It appears that he took a bath in the Seine without being conscious of it, for there are moments when a man has a furnace under his skull, and Marius had reached one of those moments. He hoped for nothing, feared nothing now; he had reached this condition since the previous day. He awaited the evening with a feverish impatience, for he had but one clear idea left, that at nine o'clock he should see Cosette. This last happiness was now his sole future; after that came the shadow. At times, while walking along the most deserted boulevards, he imagined that he could hear strange noises in Paris; then he thrust his head out



of his reverie, and said,—“Can they be fighting?” At nightfall, at nine o'clock precisely, he was at the Rue Plumet, as he had promised Cosette. He had not seen her for eight-and-forty hours, he was about to see her again. Every other thought was effaced, and he only felt an extraordinary and profound joy. Those minutes in which men live ages have this sovereign and admirable thing about them, that, at the moment when they pass, they entirely occupy the heart.

Marius removed the railing and rushed into the garden. Cosette was not at the place where she usually waited for him, and he crossed the garden, and went to the niche near the terrace. “She is waiting for me there,” he said, but Cosette was not there. He raised his eyes and saw that the shutters of the house were closed; he walked round the garden, but the garden was deserted. Then he returned to the house, and, mad with love, terrified, exasperated with grief and anxiety, he rapped at the shutters, like a master who returns home at a late hour. He rapped, he rapped again, at the risk of seeing the window open and the father's frowning face appear, and ask him.—“What do you want?” This was nothing to what he caught a glimpse of. When he had rapped, he raised his voice, and called Cosette. “Cosette!” he cried; “Cosette!” he repeated imperiously. There was no answer, and it was all over; there was no one in the garden, no one in the house. Marius fixed his desperate eyes on this mournful house, which was as black, as silent, and more empty than a tomb. He gazed at the stone bench on which he had spent so many adorable hours by Cosette's side; then he sat down on the garden steps, with his heart full of gentleness and resolution; he blessed his love in his heart, and said to himself that since Cosette was gone there was nothing left him but to die. All at once he heard a voice which seemed to come from the street, crying through the trees:

“Monsieur Marius!”

He drew himself up.

“Hilloh?” he said.

“Are you there, M. Marius?”

“Yes.”

“Monsieur Marius,” the voice resumed, “your friends are waiting for you at the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie.”

This voice was not entirely strange to him, and resembled

Eponine's rough, hoarse accents. Marius ran to the railings, pulled aside the shifting bar, passed his head through, and saw some one, who seemed to be a young man, rapidly disappearing in the twilight.

## CHAPTER XCII.

M. MABOEUF had continued to descend. The indigo experiments had succeeded no better at the Jardin des Plantes than in his garden of Austerlitz. The previous year he owed his housekeeper her wages, and now, as we have seen, he owed his landlord his rent. The Government pawnbrokers' office sold the copper-plates of his *Flora*, at the expiration of thirteen months, and some brazier had made stew-pans of them. When his plates had disappeared, as he could no longer complete the unbound copies of his *Flora*, which he still possessed, he sold off plates and text to a second-hand bookseller, as defective. Nothing was then left him of the labour of his whole life, and he began eating the money produced by the copies. When he saw that this poor resource was growing exhausted he gave up his garden, and did not attend to it; before, and long before, he had given up the two eggs and the slice of beef which he ate from time to time, and now dined on bread and potatoes. He had sold his last articles of furniture, then everything he had in duplicate, in linen, clothes, and cover-lids, and then his herbals and plates; but he still had his most precious books, among them being several of great rarity. M. Mabœuf never lit a fire in his room, and went to bed with the sun, in order not to burn a candle; it seemed as if he no longer had neighbours, for they shunned him when he went out, and he noticed it. The wretchedness of a child interests a mother, the wretchedness of a youth interests an old man, but the wretchedness of an old man interests nobody, and it is the coldest of all distresses. Still M. Mabœuf had not entirely lost his childlike serenity; his eye acquired some vivacity when it settled on his books, and he smiled when he regarded a rare edition of *Diogenes Laertius* which he had, and which was a unique copy. His glass case was the only furniture which he had retained beyond what was indispensable. One day Mother Plutarch said to him:

"I have no money to buy dinner with."



What she called dinner consisted of a loaf and four or five potatoes.

"Can't you get it on credit?" said M. Mabœuf.

"You know very well that it is refused me."

M. Mabœuf opened his bookcase, looked for a long time at all his books in turn like a father, obliged to decimate his children, would look at them before selecting, then took one up quickly, put it under his arm, and went out. He returned two hours after with nothing under his arm, laid thirty sous on the table, and said :

"You will get some dinner."

From this moment Mother Plutarch saw a dark veil, which was not raised again, settle upon the old gentleman's candid face. The next day, the next after that, and every day, M. Mabœuf had to begin again; he went out with a book and returned with a piece of silver. As the second-hand booksellers saw that he was compelled to sell they bought for twenty sous books for which he had paid twenty francs, and frequently to the same dealers. Volume by volume his whole library passed away, and he said at times, "And yet I am eighty years of age," as if he had some lurking hope that he should reach the end of his days ere he reached the end of his books. His sorrow grew, but once he had a joy: he went out with a Robert Estienne, which he sold for thirty-five sous on the Quai Malaquais, and came home with an Aldus which he had bought for forty sous in the Rue de Grès. "I owe five sous," he said quite radiantly to Mother Plutarch, but that day he did not dine. He belonged to the Horticultural Society, and his poverty was known. The President of the Society called on him, promised to speak about him to the Minister of Commerce and Agriculture, and did so. "What do you say?" the minister exclaimed, "I should think so! an old savant! a botanist! an inoffensive man! we must do something for him." The next day M. Mabœuf received an invitation to dine with the minister, and, trembling with joy, showed the letter to Mother Plutarch. "We are saved!" he said. On the appointed day he went to the minister's, and noticed that his ragged cravat, his long, square-cut coat, and shoes varnished with white of egg, astounded the footman. No one spoke to him, not even the minister, and at about ten in the evening, while still waiting for a word, he heard the minister's wife, a handsome lady in a low-necked dress, whom he had not dared to approach,

ask, "Who can that old gentleman be?" He went home on foot at midnight through the pouring rain; he had sold an Elzevir to pay his hackney-coach in going.

Every evening, before going to bed, he had fallen into the habit of reading a few pages of his *Diogenes Laertius*; for he knew enough of Greek to enjoy the peculiarities of the text which he possessed, and had no other joy now left him. A few weeks passed away, and all at once Mother Plutarch fell ill. There is one thing even more sad than having no money to buy bread at a baker's, and that is, not to have money to buy medicine at the chemist's. One night the doctor had ordered a most expensive potion, and then the disease grew worse, and a nurse was necessary. M. Mabœuf opened his bookcase, but there was nothing left in it; the last volume had departed, and the only thing left him was the *Diogenes Laertius*. He placed the unique copy under his arm and went out—it was June 4, 1832; he proceeded to Royol's successor at the Porte St. Jacques, and returned with one hundred francs. He placed the pile of five-franc pieces on the old servant's table, and entered his bedroom without uttering a syllable. At dawn of the next day he seated himself on the overturned post in his garden, and over the hedge he might have been seen the whole morning, motionless, with drooping head, and eyes vaguely fixed on the faded flower-beds. It rained every now and then, but the old man did not seem to notice it; but in the afternoon extraordinary noises broke out in Paris, resembling musket-shots, and the clamour of a multitude. Father Mabœuf raised his head, noticed a gardener passing, and asked:

"What is the matter?"

The gardener replied, with the spade on his back, and with the most peaceful accent:

"It's the rebels."

"What! rebels?"

"Yes, they are fighting."

"Why are they fighting?"

"The Lord alone knows," said the gardener.

"In what direction?"

"Over by the arsenal."

Father Mabœuf went into his house, took his hat, mechanically sought for a book to place under his arm, found none, said, "Ah, it is true!" and went out with a wandering look.



## CHAPTER XCIII.

IN the spring of 1832, although for three months cholera had chilled minds and cast over their agitation a species of dull calm, Paris had been for a long time ready for a commotion. As we have said, the great city resembles a piece of artillery when it is loaded,—a spark need only fall and the gun goes off. In June, 1832, the spark was the death of General Lamarque. Lamarque was a man of renown and of action, and had displayed in succession, under the Empire and the Restoration, the two braveries necessary for the two epochs, the bravery of the battlefield and the bravery of the oratorical tribune. He was eloquent as he had been valiant, and a sword was felt in his words; like Foy, his predecessor, after holding the command erect, he held liberty erect; he sat between the left and the extreme left, beloved by the people because he accepted the chances of the future, and beloved by the mob because he had served the Emperor well. He was, with Gérard and Drouot, one of Napoleon's marshals *in petto*, and the hiatus of 1815 affected him like a personal insult. He hated Wellington with a direct hatred, which pleased the multitude, and for the last seventeen years, scarcely paying attention to intermediate events, he had majestically nursed his grief for Waterloo. In his dying hour he pressed to his heart a sword which the officers of the Hundred Days had given him, and while Napoleon died uttering the word *army*, Lamarque died pronouncing the word *country*. His death, which was expected, was feared by the people as a loss, and by the Government as an opportunity. This death was a mourning, and, like everything which is bitter mourning may turn into revolt. This really happened on the previous evening, and on the morning of June 5th, the day fixed for the interment of Lamarque, the Faubourg St. Antoine, close to which the procession would pass, assumed a formidable aspect. This tumultuous network of streets was filled with rumours, and people armed themselves as they could. Carpenters carried off the bolts of their shop "to break in doors with"; one of them made a dagger of a stocking-weaver's hook, by breaking off the hook and sharpening the stump. Another in his fever "to attack" slept for three nights in his clothes.

On June 5, then, a day of sunshine and shower, the

funeral procession of General Lamarque passed through Paris with the official military pomp, somewhat increased by precautions. Two battalions with covered drums and trailing muskets, ten thousand of the National Guard with their sabres at their side, and the batteries of the artillery of the National Guard escorted the coffin, and the hearse was drawn by young men. The officers of the Invalides followed immediately after, bearing laurel branches, and then came a countless, agitated, and strange multitude, the sectionists of the friends of the people, the school of law, the school of medicine, refugees of all nations, Spanish, Italian, German, Polish flags, horizontal tri-colour flags, every banner possible, children waving green branches, stone-cutters and carpenters out of work at this very time, and printers easy to recognise by their paper caps, marching two and two, three and three, uttering cries, nearly all shaking sticks, and some sabres, without order, but with one soul, at one moment a mob, at another a column. Squads selected their chiefs, and a man armed with a brace of pistols, which were perfectly visible, seemed to pass others in review, whose files made way for him. On the side-walks of the boulevards, on the branches of the trees, in the balconies, at the windows and on the roofs, there was a dense throng of men, women, and children, whose eyes were full of anxiety. An armed crowd passed, and a startled crowd looked at it; on its side Government was observing, with its hand on the sword-hilt. Four squadrons of carbineers, mounted, and with their trumpeters at the head, with their cartouche boxes full, and their musketoons loaded, might be seen on the Place Louis XV., in the Pays Latin, and at the Jardin des Plantes; the Municipal Guard were echeloned from street to street; at the Halle-aux-Vins was a squadron of dragoons, at the Grève one half of the 12th Light Infantry, while the other half was at the Bastille; the 6th Dragoons were at the Celestins, and the court of the Louvre was crammed with artillery; all the rest of the troops were confined to barracks, without counting the regiments in the environs of Paris. The alarmed authorities held suspended over the threatening multitude twenty-four thousand soldiers in the city, and thirty thousand in the suburbs.

Various rumours circulated in the procession, legitimist intrigues were talked about, and they spoke about the Duke of Reichstadt, whom God was marking for death at the very moment when the crowd designated him for Emperor. **A**



person who was never discovered announced that at appointed hours two overseers, gained over, would open to the people the gates of a small arm-factory. An enthusiasm blended with despondency was visible in the uncovered heads of most of the persons present, and here and there too in this multitude, suffering from so many violent but noble emotions, might be seen criminal faces and ignoble lips, that muttered, "Let us plunder."

The hearse passed the Bastille, followed the canal, crossed the small bridge, and reached the esplanade of the bridge of Austerlitz, where it halted. A circle was formed round the hearse, and the vast crowd was hushed. Lafayette spoke, and bade farewell to Lamarque: it was a touching and august moment,—all heads were uncovered, and all hearts beat. All at once a man on horseback, dressed in black, appeared in the middle of the group with a red flag, though others say with a pike surmounted by a red cap. Lafayette turned his head away, and Excelmans left the procession. This red flag aroused a storm and disappeared in it: from the Boulevard Bourdon to the bridge of Austerlitz one of those clamours which resemble billows stirred up the multitude, and two prodigious cries were raised, "Lamarque at the Pantheon!" "Lafayette at the Hôtel de Ville!" Young men, amid the acclamations of the crowd, began dragging Lamarque in the hearse over the bridge of Austerlitz, and Lafayette in a hackney-coach along the Quai Morland. In the crowd that surrounded and applauded Lafayette people noticed and pointed out to each other a German of the name of Ludwig Snyder, who has since died a centenarian, who also went through the campaign of 1776, and had fought at Trenton under Washington, and under Lafayette at Brandywine.

The municipal cavalry galloped along the left bank to stop the passage of the bridge, while on the right the dragoons came out of the Celestins and deployed along the Quai Morland. The people who were drawing Lafayette suddenly perceived them at a turning of the quay, and cried, "The dragoons!" The troops advanced at a walk, silently, with their pistols in their holsters, sabres undrawn, and musquetoons slung with an air of gloomy expectation. Two hundred yards from the little bridge they halted, the coach in which Lafayette was went up to them, they opened their ranks to let it pass, and then closed up again. At this moment the dragoons and the crowd came in contact, and



the women fled in terror. What took place in this fatal minute? no one could say, for it is the dark moment when two clouds clash together. Some state that a bugle-call sounding the charge was heard on the side of the Arsenal, others that a dragoon was stabbed with a knife by a lad. The truth is, that three shots were suddenly fired, one killing Major Cholut, the second an old deaf woman who was closing her window in the Rue Contrescarpe, while the third grazed an officer's shoulder. A woman cried, "They have begun too soon!" and all at once a squadron of dragoons was seen galloping up on the opposite side with drawn sabres, and sweeping everything before it.

At such a moment the last word is said, the tempest is unchained, stones shower, the fusilade bursts forth: many rush to the water's edge and cross the small arm of the Seine, which is now filled up: the timber-yards on Ile Louviers, that ready-made citadel, bristle with combatants, stakes are pulled up, pistols are fired, a barricade is commenced, the young men driven back, pass over the bridge of Austerlitz with the hearse at the double, and charge the Municipal Guard: the carbineers gallop up, the dragoons sabre, the crowd disperses in all directions, a rumour of war flies to the four corners of Paris: men cry "To arms" and run, overthrow, fly, and resist. Passion spreads the riot as the wind does fire.

Nothing is more extraordinary than the commencement of a riot, for everything breaks out everywhere at once. Before a quarter of an hour had elapsed, fighting was going on simultaneously at twenty different points of Paris. Two intrepid men, tried by the great wars, Marshal de Lobau and General Bugeaud, commanded the troops—Bugeaud under Lobau.

At the Tuileries there was not an additional sentry posted, and Louis Philippe was full of serenity

## CHAPTER XCIV.

At the moment when the insurrection, breaking out through the collision between the people and the troops in front of the Arsenal, produced a retrograde movement in the multitude that followed the hearse, and which pressed with the whole length of the boulevards upon the head of the procession, there was a frightful reflux. The ranks were broken,



and all ran or escaped, some with cries of attack, others with the pallor of flight. The great stream which covered the boulevards divided in a second, overflowed on the right and left, and spread in torrents over two hundred streets at once, as if a dyke had burst. At this moment a ragged lad who was coming down the Rue Menilmontant, holding in his hand a branch of flowering laburnum which he had picked on the heights of Belleville, noticed in the shop of a seller of curiosities an old holster pistol. He threw his branch on the pavement, and cried :

"Mother What's-your-name, I'll borrow your machine."

And he ran off with the pistol. Two minutes after, a crowd of frightened citizens flying through the Rue Bassenet met the lad, who was brandishing his pistol and singing loudly. It was little Gavroche going to the wars. On the boulevard he noticed that his pistol had no hammer. Gavroche was acquainted with all the popular tunes in circulation, and mingled with them his own chirping, and, as a young vagabond, he made a *pot-pourri* of the voices of nature and the voices of Paris.

He reached the Rue du Pont aux Choux, and noticed that there was only one shop still open in that street, and it was worthy of reflection that it was a confectioner's. It was a providential opportunity to eat one more apple-puff before entering the unknown. Gavroche stopped, felt in his pockets, turned them inside out, found nothing, not even a sou, and began shouting, "Help !" It is hard to go without the last cake, but for all that Gavroche went on his way. Two minutes after he was in the Rue St. Louis, and on crossing the Rue du Parc Royal he felt the necessity of compensating himself for the impossible apple-puff; and gave himself the immense treat of tearing down in open daylight the playbills. A little further on, seeing a party of stout gentry, who appeared to him to be retired from business, he shrugged his shoulders and spat out this mouthful of philosophic bile :

"How fat annuitants are ! they wallow in good dinners. Ask them what they do with their money, and they don't know. They eat it, eat their bellyful."

Holding a pistol without a cock in the streets is such a public function, that Gavroche felt his humour increase at every step. He cried between the scraps of the Marseillaise which he sang :

"All goes well. I suffer considerably in my left paw. I

have broken my rheumatism, but I am happy, citizens. The bourgeois have only to hold firm, and I am going to sing them some subversive couplets. I have just come from the boulevard, my friends, where it's getting warm, and the soup is simmering; it is time to skim the pot. Forward, my men, and let their impure blood inundate the furrows! I give my days for my country. I shall not see my concubine again, it's all over. Well, no matter! long live joy! let us fight, egad, for I have had enough of despotism!"

At this moment the horse of a lancer, in the National Guard, who was passing, fell. Gavroche laid his pistol on the pavement, helped the man up, and then helped to raise the horse, after which he picked up his pistol and went his way again.

Gavroche at length reached the Marché St. Jean, and there he joined himself to a band led by Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Feuilly. They were all more or less armed, and Bahorel and Prouvaire had joined them, and swelled the group. Enjolras had a double-barrelled fowling-piece, Combeferre a National Guard's musket bearing the number of a legion, and in his waist-belt two pistols, which his unbuttoned coat allowed to be seen. Jean Prouvaire an old cavalry musketoon, and Bahorel a carbine; Courfeyrac brandished a sword drawn from a cane, while Feuilly with a naked sabre in his hand walked along shouting, "Long live Poland!" They reached the Quai Morland without neckcloths or hats, panting for breath, drenched with rain, but with lightning in their eyes. Gavroche calmly approached them:

"Where are we going?"

"Come on," said Courfeyrac.

Behind Feuilly marched, or rather bounded, Bahorel, a fish in the water of revolt. He had a crimson waistcoat, and uttered words which smash everything. His waistcoat upset a passer-by, who cried wildly, "Here are the reds!"

"The reds, the reds," Bahorel answered, "that's a funny fear, citizen. For my part, I do not tremble at a poppy, and the little red cap does not inspire me with any terror. Citizen, believe me, let us leave a fear of the red to horned cattle."

He noticed a corner wall, on which was placarded the most peaceful piece of paper in the world, a permission to eat eggs, a Lent mandamus addressed by the Archbishop of Paris to his "flock." Bahorel exclaimed:



"A flock! a polite way of saying geese." And he tore the paper down. This conquered Gavroche, and from this moment he began studying Bahorel.

"Bahorel," Enjolras observed, "you are wrong, you should have left that order alone, for we have nothing to do with it, and you needlessly exposed your passion. Keep your stock by you; a man does not fire out of the ranks any more with his mind than with his gun."

"Every man has his own way, Enjolras," Bahorel replied; "the bishop's prose offends me, and I insist on eating eggs without receiving permission to do so. Yours is the cold burning style, while I amuse myself; moreover, I am not expending myself, but getting the steam up, and if I tore that order down, Hercle! it is to give me an appetite."

A tumultuous crowd accompanied them—students, artists, young men affiliated to the *Cougourde* of Aix, artisans, and lightermen, armed with sticks and bayonets, and some, like *Combeferre*, with pistols passed through their trouser-belts. An old man, who appeared very aged, marched in this band; he had no weapon, and hurried on, that he might not be left behind, though he looked thoughtful. It was M. Mabœuf. We will tell what had occurred. Enjolras and his friends were on the *Bourdon Boulevard* near the granaries, at the moment when the dragoons charged, and Enjolras, *Courfeyrac*, and *Combeferre* were among those who turned into the *Rue Bassompierre* shouting "To the barricades!" In the *Rue Lesdiguières* they met an old man walking along, and what attracted their attention was that he was moving very irregularly, as if intoxicated. Moreover, he had his hat in his hand, although it had rained the whole morning, and was raining rather hard at that very moment. *Courfeyrac* recognised Father Mabœuf, whom he knew through having accompanied Marius sometimes as far as his door. Knowing the peaceful and more than timid habits of the churchwarden and bibliomaniac, and stupefied at seeing him in the midst of the tumult, within two yards of cavalry charges, almost in the midst of the musketry fire, bareheaded in the rain, and walking about among bullets, he accosted him, and the rebel of five-and-twenty and the octogenarian exchanged this dialogue.

"Monsieur Mabœuf, you had better go home."

"Why?"

"There is going to be a row."

"Very well."

"Sabre-cuts and shots, M. Mabœuf."

"Very well."

"Cannon-shots."

"Very well. Where are you gentlemen going?"

"To upset the Government."

"Very well."

And he began following them, but since that moment had not said a word. His step had become suddenly firm, and when workmen offered him an arm, he declined it with a shake of the head. He walked almost at the head of the column, having at once the command of a man who is marching and the face of a man who is asleep.

"What a determined old fellow!" the students muttered, and the rumour ran along the party that he was an ex-conventionalist, an old regicide. The band turned into the Rue de la Verrerie, and little Gavroche marched at the head, singing at the top of his voice, which made him resemble a bugler.

They were going to St. Merry. The band swelled every moment, and near the Rue des Billettes, a tall, grayish-haired man, whose rough bold face Courfeyrac, Enjolras, and Combeferre noticed, though not one of them knew him, joined them. Gavroche, busy singing, whistling, shouting, and rapping on the window-shutters with his pistol-butt, paid no attention to this man. As they went through the Rue de la Verrerie they happened to pass Courfeyrac's door.

"That's lucky," said Courfeyrac, "for I have forgotten my purse and lost my hat."

He left the band and bounded upstairs, where he put on an old hat and put his purse in his pocket. He also took up a large square box of the size of a portmanteau, which was concealed among his dirty linen. As he was running downstairs again his portress hailed him.

"Monsieur de Courfeyrac!"

"Portress, what is your name?" Courfeyrac retorted.

She stood in stupefaction.

"Why, you know very well, sir, that my name is Mother Veuvain."

"Well then, if ever you call me M. de Courfeyrac again, I shall call you Mother de Veuvain; now speak, what is it?"

"Some one wishes to speak to you."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know."



"Where is he?"

"In my lodge."

"The devil!" said Courfeyrac.

"But he has been waiting for more than an hour for you to come in."

At the same time a species of young workman, thin, livid, small, marked with freckles, dressed in an old blouse and a pair of patched cotton-velvet trousers, who looked more like a girl attired as a boy than a man, stepped out of the lodge and said to Courfeyrac in a voice which was not the least in the world a feminine voice:

"Monsieur Marius, if you please?"

"He is not in."

"Will he come in to-night?"

"I don't know anything about it."

And Courfeyrac added, "I shall not be in to-night."

The young man looked at him intently, and asked:

"Why so?"

"Because I shall not."

"Where are you going, then?"

"How does that concern you?"

"Shall I carry your chest for you?"

"I am going to the barricades."

"May I go with you?"

"If you like," Courfeyrac replied; "the street is free, and the pavement belongs to everybody."

And he ran off to rejoin his friends; when he had done so, he gave one of them the box to carry; and it was not till a quarter of an hour after that he noticed that the young man was really following them.

A band does not go exactly where it wishes, and we have explained that a puff of wind directs it. They passed St. Merry, and found themselves, without knowing exactly how, in the Rue St. Denis.

## CHAPTER XCV.

THE Parisians, who, at the present time, on entering the Rue Rambuteau from the side of the markets, notice on their right, opposite the Rue Mondétour, a basket-maker's shop having for sign a basket in the shape of Napoleon the Great, do not suspect the terrible scenes which this very site saw hardly thirty years ago. Here were the Rue de la

Chanvrerie, which old title-deeds write Chanverrierie, and the celebrated wine-shop called Corinth.

For the clearness of our narrative, we may be permitted to have recourse to the simple mode which we employed for Waterloo. Those persons who wish to represent to themselves in a tolerably exact manner the mass of houses which at that day stood at the north-east corner of the markets, at the spot where the opening of the Rue Rambuteau now is, need only imagine an N whose two vertical strokes are the Rue de la Grande Truanderie, and the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and of which the Rue de la Petite Truanderie would be the cross-stroke. The old Rue Mondétour intersected the three strokes with the most tortuous angles, so that the Dædalian entanglement of these four streets was sufficient to make, upon a space of one hundred square yards, between the markets and the Rue St. Denis on one side, between the Rue du Cygne and the Rue des Precheurs, on the other side, seven islets of houses, strangely cut, of different heights, standing sideways, and as if accidentally, and scarce separated by narrow cracks, like the blocks of stone in a dock. We say narrow cracks, and cannot give a fairer idea of these obscure, narrow, angular lanes, bordered by tenements eight storeys in height. These houses were so decrepit that in the Rues de la Chanvrerie and La Petite Truanderie, the frontages were supported by beams running across from one house to the other. The street was narrow and the gutter wide; the passer-by walked on a constantly damp pavement, passing shops like cellars heavy posts shod with iron, enormous piles of filth, and gates armed with extraordinarily old palings. The Rue Rambuteau has devastated all this. The name of Mondétour exactly describes the windings of all this lay-stall. A little farther on it was found even better expressed by the Rue Pirouette, which threw itself into the Rue Mondétour. The wayfarer who turned out of the Rue St. Denis into the Rue de la Chanvrerie saw it gradually contract before him, as if he had entered an elongated funnel. At the end of the street, which was very short, he found the passage barred on the side of the markets by a tall row of houses, and he might have fancied himself in a blind alley had he not perceived on his right and left two black cuts through which he could escape. It was the Rue Mondétour, which joined on one side the Rue des Precheurs, on the other the Rue du Cygne. At the end of this sort of



blind alley, at the corner of the right-hand cutting, a house lower than the rest, forming a species of cape in the street, might be noticed. It is in this house, only two storeys high, that an illustrious cabaret had been installed for more than three hundred years.

The spot was good, and the landlords succeeded each other from father to son. In the time of Mathurin Régnier this inn was called the "Rose-pot," and as rebuses were fashionable, it had as sign a post painted pink, which represented a "Poteau rose," hence the Pot-aux-roses. In the last century worthy Natoire, one of the fantastic masters disdained at the present day by the stiff school, having got tipsy several times in this inn at the same table where Régnier had got drunk, painted out of gratitude a bunch of currants on the pink post. The landlord, in his delight, changed his sign, and had the words gilt under the bunch, "au Raisin de Corinthe," hence the name of Corinth. Nothing is more natural to drunkards than ellipses, for they are the zig-zags of language. Corinth had gradually dethroned the rose-pot, and the last landlord of the dynasty, Father Hucheloup, not being acquainted with the tradition, had the post painted blue.

A ground-floor room in which was the bar, a first-floor room in which was a billiard-table, a spiral wooden staircase piercing the ceiling, wine on the tables, smoke on the walls, and candles by daylight—such was the inn. A staircase with a trap in the ground-floor room led to the cellar, and the apartments of the Hucheloups were on the second floor, reaching by a staircase more like a ladder, and through a door hidden in the wall of the large first-floor room. Under the roof were two garrets, the nests of the maid-servants, and the kitchen shared the ground-floor with the bar. Father Hucheloup might have been born a chemist, but was really a cook, and customers not only drank but ate in his wine-shop. Hucheloup had invented an excellent dish, which could be only eaten at his establishment; it was stuffed carp, which he called *carpes au gras*. The Rue de la Chanvrerie and Corinth have disappeared under the pavement of the Rue Rambuteau. As we have said, Corinth was a meeting-place, if not a gathering-place, of Courfeyrac and his friends, and it was Grantaire who discovered it. People drank there, ate there, and made a row there: they paid little, paid badly or paid not at all, but were always welcome. Father Hucheloup was a worthy fellow. Hucheloup, whom



we have just called a worthy fellow, was an eating-house keeper with a moustache, an amusing variety. He always looked ill-tempered, appeared wishful to intimidate his customers, growled at persons who came in, and seemed more disposed to quarrel with them than serve them. And yet we maintain people were always welcome. This peculiarity filled his bar, and brought to him young men who said, "Let us go and have a look at Father Hucheloup." He had been a fencing-master, and would suddenly break out into a laugh; he had a rough voice, but was a merry fellow. His was a comical foundation with a tragical look; and he asked for nothing better than to frighten you, something like the snuff-boxes which had the shape of a pistol—the detonation produces a sneeze. He had for wife Mother Hucheloup, a bearded and very ugly being. About 1830 Father Hucheloup died, and with him disappeared the secret of the *carpes au gras*. His widow, who was almost inconsolable, carried on the business, but the cooking degenerated, and became execrable, and the wine, which had always been bad, was frightful. Courfeyrac and his friends, however, continued to go to Corinth—through pity, said Bossuet.

Widow Hucheloup was short of breath and shapeless, and had rustic recollections. The first-floor room, where the restaurant was, was a large, long apartment, crowded with stools, chairs, benches, and tables, and an old rickety billiard-table. It was reached by the spiral staircase which led to a square hole in the corner of the room, like a ship's hatchway. This apartment, lighted by only one narrow window and a constantly-burning lamp, had a garret-look about it, and all the four-legged articles of furniture behaved as if they had only three.

Two servant-girls, called Matelotte and Gibelotte, and who were never known by any other names, helped Ma'am Hucheloup in placing on the tables bottles of blue wine, and the various messes served to the hungry guests in earthenware bowls. Matelotte, stout, round, red-haired, and noisy, an ex-favourite sultana of the defunct Hucheloup, was uglier than the ugliest mythological monster; and yet, as it is always proper that the servant should be a little behind the mistress, she was not so ugly as Ma'am Hucheloup. Gibelotte, tall, delicate, white with a lymphatic whiteness, with blue circles round her eyes, and drooping lids, ever exhausted and oppressed, and suffering from what



may be called chronic lassitude, the first to rise, the last to go to bed, waited on everybody, even the other servant, silently and gently, and smiling a sort of vague, sleepy smile through her weariness.

Laigle of Meaux, as we know, liked better to live with Joly than any one else, and he had a lodging much as the bird has a branch. The two friends lived together, ate together, slept together, and had everything in common, Musichetta perhaps included. They were, to use the expression of the schools, *bini*, or twins. On the morning of June 5 they went to breakfast at Corinth. Joly had a cold in his head, and Laigle's coat was threadbare, while Joly was well dressed. It was about nine in the morning when they pushed open the door of Corinth, and went up to the first-floor room, where they were received by Matelotte and Gibelotte.

"Oysters, cheese, and ham," said Laigle.

They sat down at a table; the room was empty, there was no one in it but themselves. Gibelotte, recognising Joly and Laigle, placed a bottle of wine on the table, and they attacked the first dozen of oysters. A head appeared in the hatchway, and a voice said :

"As I was passing, I smelt a delicious perfume of Brie cheese; so I stepped in."

It was Grantaire; he took a stool and sat down at the table. Gibelotte, on seeing Grantaire, placed two bottles of wine on the table, which made three.

"Are you going to drink these two bottles?" Laigle asked Grantaire; who replied :

"All men are ingenious, but you alone are ingenuous. Two bottles never yet astonished a man."

The others began with eating, but Grantaire began with drinking; a pint was soon swallowed.

"Why, you must have a hole in your stomach," said Laigle.

"Well, you have one in your elbow," Grantaire retorted, and after emptying his glass, he added :

"Oh yes, Laigle of the funeral orations, your coat is old."

"I should hope so," Laigle replied, "for my coat and I live comfortably together. It has assumed all my wrinkles, does not hurt me anywhere, has moulded itself on my deformities, and is complacent to all my movements, and I only feel its presence because it keeps me warm."

"Grantaire," Joly asked, "have you come from the boulevard?"

"No."

"Laigle and I have just seen the head of the procession pass. It is a marvellous sight."

"How quiet this street is!" Laigle exclaimed. "Who could suspect that Paris is turned topsy-turvy? How easy it is to see that formerly there were monasteries all round here! There was all around where we are now sitting a busy swarm of monks, shod and barefooted, tonsured and bearded, gray, black, white, Franciscans, Minimi, Capuchins, Carmelites, little Augustines, great Augustines, old Augustines——"

"Don't talk about monks," Grantaire interrupted, "for it makes me feel that I want to scratch myself." Then he exclaimed:

"Bouh! I have just swallowed a bad oyster, and that has brought back my hypochondria. Oysters are spoiled, servant-girls are ugly, and I hate the human race. I passed just now before the great public library in the Rue Richelieu, and that pile of oyster-shells, which is called a library, disgusts me with thinking. What paper! what ink! what pothooks and hangers! all that has been written! what ass was it who said man was a featherless biped? And then, too, I met a pretty girl I know, lovely as spring, and worthy to be called Floreal, who was ravished, transported, happy in Paradise, the wretch, because yesterday a hideous banker, spotted with small-pox, deigned to throw his handkerchief to her! Alas! woman looks out for a keeper quite as much as a lover; cats catch mice as well as birds. This girl, not two months ago, was living respectably in a garret, and fitted little copper circles into the eyelet-holes of stays, what do you call it? She sewed, she had a flock bed, she lived by the side of a pot of flowers, and was happy. Now she is a bankeress, and the transformation took place last night. I met the victim this morning perfectly happy, and the hideous thing was that the wretched creature was quite as pretty this morning as she was yesterday, and there was no sign of the financier on her face. Roses have this more or less than women, that the traces which the caterpillars leave on them are visible. Ah! there is no morality left in the world, and I call as witnesses the myrtle, symbol of love, the laurel, symbol of war, the olive, that absurd symbol of peace, the apple-tree, which nearly



choked Adam with its pips, and the fig-tree, the grandfather of petticoats. As for justice, do you know what justice is? The Gauls cover Clusium, Rome protects Clusium and asks what wrong Clusium has done them. Brennus answers, "The wrong which Alba did to you, the wrong that Fidène did to you, the wrong that the Equi, Volscians, and Sabines did to you. They were your neighbours, and the Clusians are ours. We understand neighbourhood in the same way as you do. You stole Alba, and we take Clusium." Rome says, "You shall not take Clusium." Brennus took Rome, and then cried *l'æ victis!* That is what justice is! Oh, what birds of prey there are in the world! What eagles, what eagles! the thought makes my flesh creep."

And after this burst of eloquence Grantaire had a burst of coughing, which was well deserved.

"Talking of a revolution," said Joly, "it seems that Barius is decidedly in love."

"Do you know who with?" Laigle asked.

"Do."

"No?"

"Do, I tell you."

"The loves of Marius!" Grantaire exclaimed, "I can see them from here. Marius is a fog and will have found a vapour. Marius belongs to the poetic race, and poet and madman are convertible terms. *Tivmbræus Apollo*. Marius and his Marie, or his Maria, or his Mariette, or his Marion, must be a funny brace of lovers. I can fancy what it is: ecstasies in which kissing is forgotten. Chaste on earth but connected in the infinitude. They are souls that have feelings, and they sleep together in the stars."

Grantaire was attacking his second bottle, and perhaps his second harangue, when a new head emerged from the staircase hatchway. It was a boy under ten years of age, ragged, very short and yellow, with a bull-dog face, a quick eye, and an enormous head of hair: he was dripping with wet, but seemed happy. The lad choosing without hesitation among the three, though he knew none of them, addressed Laigle of Meaux.

"Are you M. Bossuet?" he asked.

"I am called so," Laigle replied; "what do you want?"

"A tall, light-haired gent said to me on the boulevard, 'Do you know Mother Hucheloup's?' I said, 'Yes, in the Rue Chanvrerie, the old one's widow.' Says he to me,

'Go there, you will find Monsieur Bossuet there, and say to him from me, A—B—C.' I suppose it's a trick played you, eh? he gave me ten sous."

"Joly, lend me ten sous," said Laigle; and turning to Grantaire, "Grantaire, lend me ten sous."

This made twenty sous, which Laigle gave the lad. "Thank you, sir," he said.

"What is your name?" Laigle asked.

"Navet, Gavroche's friend."

"Stay with us," Laigle said.

"Breakfast with us," Grantaire added.

The lad replied, "I can't, for I belong to the procession, and have to cry, 'Down with Polignac.'"

And, drawing his foot slowly behind him, which is the most respectful of bows possible, he went away. When he was gone, Laigle said in a low voice:

"A—B—C, that is to say, funeral of General Lamarque."

"The tall, fair man," Grantaire observed, "is Enjolras, who has sent to warn you."

"Shall we go?" asked Bossuet.

"It's raididg," said Joly; "I have sword to go through fire, but dot through water, and I do dot wish to bake by cold worse."

"I shall stay here," Grantaire remarked; "I prefer a breakfast to a hearse."

"Conclusion, we remain," Laigle continued; "in that case, let us drink. Besides, we may miss the funeral without missing the row."

"Ah, the row!" cried Joly, "I'b id that."

Laigle rubbed his hands.

"So the Revolution of 1830 is going to begin over again."

"I do not care a rap for your revolution," Grantaire remarked, "and I do not execrate the present Government, for it is the crown tempered by the cotton night-cap, a sceptre terminating in an umbrella. In such weather as this Louis Philippe might use his royalty for two objects, stretch out the sceptre-end against the people, and open the umbrella-end against the sky."

The room was dark, and heavy clouds completely veiled the daylight. There was no one in the wine-shop or in the streets, for everybody had gone "to see the events."

"Is it midday or midnight?" Bossuet asked. "I can see nothing; bring a candle, Gibelotte."

Grantaire was drinking sorrowfully.



"Enjolras disdains me," he muttered. "Enjoiras said to himself, 'Joly is ill and Grantaire is drunk,' and so he sent Navet to Bossuet. And yet, if he had fetched me, I would have followed him. All the worse for Enjolras ! I will not go to his funeral "

This resolution formed, Bossuet, Grantaire, and Joly did not stir from the wine-shop, and at about 2 P.M. the table at which they sat was covered with empty bottles. Two candles burnt on it, one in a perfectly green copper candlestick, the other in the neck of a cracked water-bottle. Grantaire had led Joly and Bossuet to wine, and Bossuet and Joly had brought Grantaire back to Joly. As for Grantaire, he gave up wine at midday, as a poor inspirer of dreams. Wine is not particularly valued by serious sots, for inebriety there is black magic and white magic, and wine is only the white magic. Grantaire was attracted rather than arrested by the blackness of a formidable intoxication yawning before him, and he had given up bottles and taken to the dram glass, which is an abyss. Not having at hand either opium or hashish, and wishing to fill his brain with darkness, he turned to that frightful mixture of brandy, stout, and absinthe, which produces such terrible lethargies. Of these three vapours, beer, brandy, and absinthe, the lead of the soul is made : they are three darknesses in which the celestial butterfly is drowned ; and three dumb furies, nightmare, night, and death, which hover over the sleeping Psyche, are produced, in a membranous smoke vaguely condensed into a bat's wing. Grantaire had not yet reached that phase, far from it : he was prodigiously gay, and Bossuet and Joly kept even with him. Grantaire added to the eccentric accentuation of words and ideas the incoherency of gestures ; he laid his left hand on his knee with a dignified air, and with his neckcloth unloosed, straddling his stool, and with his full glass in his right hand, he threw these solemn words at the stout servant-girl, Matelotte.

"Open the gates of the palace ! Let every man belong to the French Academy, and have the right of embracing Madame Hucheloup ! Let us drink."

And turning to the landlady, he added :

"Antique female, consecrated by custom, approach, that I may contemplate thee."

And Joly exclaimed :

"Batelotte and Gibelotte, don't give Grantaire any more drink. He is spending a frightful sum, and only since this

borning has devoured in shabeful prodigality two francs, twenty-five centimes."

And Grantaire went on :

"Who has unhooked the stars without my leave, in order to place them on the table in lieu of candles?"

Bossuet, who was very drunk, had retained his calmness, and was sitting on the sill of the open window, letting the rain drench his back, while he gazed at his two friends. All at once he heard behind him a tumult, hurried footsteps, and shouts of "To arms!" He turned, and noticed in the Rue St. Denis at the end of the Rue Chanvrerie, Enjolras passing, carbine in hand, Gavroche with his pistol, Feuilly with his sabre, Courfeyrac with his sword, Jean Prouvaire with his musketoon, Combeferre with his fowling-piece, Bahorel with his musket, and the whole armed and stormy band that followed them. The Rue de la Chanvrerie was not a pistol-shot in length, so Bossuet improvised a speaking-trumpet with his two hands round his mouth, and shouted :

"Courfeyrac! Courfeyrac! hilloh!"

Courfeyrac heard the summons, perceived Bossuet, and walked a few steps down the Rue de la Chanvrerie, exclaiming, "What do you want?" which was crossed by a "Where are you going?"

"To make a barricade," Courfeyrac answered

"Well, why not make it here? the spot is good."

"That is true, Eagle," said Courfeyrac.

And at a sign from Courfeyrac the band rushed into the Rue de la Chanvrerie.

The ground was, in fact, admirably suited; the entrance of the street was wide, the end narrowed, and, like a blind alley, Corinth formed a contraction in it; the Rue Mondétour could be easily barred right and left, and no attack was possible save by the Rue St. Denis, that is to say, from the front, and in the open. Bossuet, drunk, had had the inspiration of Hannibal fasting. At the sound of the band rushing on, terror seized on the whole street, and not a passer-by but disappeared. More quickly than a flash of lightning, shops, stalls, gates, doors, Venetian blinds, and shutters of every size, were shut from the ground-floor to the roofs, at the end, on the right, and on the left. An old terrified woman fixed up a mattress before her window with clothes-props, in order to deaden the musketry; the public-house alone remained open—and for an excellent reason, because the insurgents had rushed into it.



"O Lord, Lord!" Ma'am Hucheloup sighed.

Bossuet ran down to meet Courfeyrac, and Joly, who had gone to the window, shouted:

"Courfeyrac, you ought to have brought an umbrella. You will catch cold."

In a few minutes twenty iron bars were pulled down from the railings in front of the inn, and ten yards of pavement dug up. Gavroche and Bahorel seized, as it passed, the truck of a lime-dealer, of the name of Anceau, and found in it three barrels of lime, which they placed under the piles of paving-stones; Enjolras had raised the cellar-flap, and all Ma'am Hucheloup's empty casks went to join the barrels of lime; Feuilly, with his fingers accustomed to illumine the delicate sticks of fans, reinforced the barrels and the trucks with two massive piles of stones. The supporting shores were pulled away from the frontage of an adjoining house, and laid on the casks. When Courfeyrac and Bossuet turned round, one half the street was already barred by a rampart, taller than a man, for there is nothing like the hand of the people to build up anything that is built by demolishing. Matelotte and Gibelotte were mixed up with the workmen, and the latter went backwards and forwards, loaded with rubbish, and her lassitude helped at the barricade. She served paving-stones as she would have served wine, with a sleepy look. An omnibus drawn by two white horses passed the end of the street: Bossuet jumped over the stones, ran up, stopped the driver, ordered the passengers to get out, offered his hand to "the ladies," dismissed the conductor, and returned, pulling the horses on by the bridle.

"Omnibuses," he said, "must not pass before Corinth. *Non licet omnibus adire Corinthum.*"

A moment after the unharnessed horses were struggling down the Rue Mondétour, and the omnibus lying on its side completed the barricade. Ma'am Hucheloup, quite upset, had sought refuge on the first-floor; her eyes were wandering and looked without seeing, and her cries of alarm dared not issue from her throat.

"It is the end of the world," she muttered.

Joly deposited a kiss on Ma'am Hucheloup's fat, red, wrinkled neck, and said to Grantaire, "My dear fellow, I have always considered a woman's neck an infinitely delicate thing." But Grantaire had reached the highest regions of dithyramb. When Matelotte came up to the

first-floor he seized her round the waist, and burst into loud peals of laughter at the window.

Enjolras, who was standing on the top of the barricade, gun in hand, raised his handsome, stern face. Enjolras, as we know, blended the Spartan with the Puritan; he would have died at Thermopylæ with Leonidas, and burnt Drogheda with Cromwell.

"Grantaire," he cried, "go and sleep off your wine elsewhere; this is the place for intoxication, and not for drunkenness. Do not dishonour the barricade."

These angry words produced on Grantaire a singular effect, and it seemed as if he had received a glass of cold water in his face. He appeared suddenly sobered, sat down near the window, gazed at Enjolras with inexpressible tenderness, and said to him:

"Let me sleep here."

"Go and sleep elsewhere," Enjolras cried.

But Grantaire, still fixing on him his tender and misty eyes, answered:

"Let me sleep here till I die here."

Enjolras looked at him disdainfully.

"Grantaire, you are incapable of believing, thinking, wishing, living, and dying."

Grantaire replied in a grave voice:

"You will see."

He stammered a few more unintelligible words, then his head fell noisily on the table, and, as is the usual effect of the second period of ebriety into which Enjolras had roughly and suddenly thrust him, a moment later he was asleep.

## CHAPTER XCVI.

BAHOREL, delighted with the barricade, exclaimed: "How well the street looks when dressed for a ball!"

Courfeyrac, while gradually demolishing the public-house, tried to console the widowed landlady.

"Mother Hucheloup, were you not complaining the other day that you had been summoned by the police, because Gibelotte shook a counterpane out of the window?"

"Yes, my good Monsieur Courfeyrac. Ah! good gracious! are you going to put that table too in your horror? Yes, and the Government also condemned me to a fine of one hundred francs on account of a flower-pot



that fell out of the garret into the street. Is that not abominable?"

"Well, Mother Hucheloup, we are going to avenge you."

Mother Hucheloup did not exactly see the advantage accruing to her from the reparation made her. The rain had ceased, and recruits began to arrive. Artisans brought under their blouses a barrel of gunpowder, a hamper containing carboys of vitriol, two or three carnival torches, and a basket full of lamps, "remaining from the king's birthday," which was quite recent, as it was celebrated on May 1. It was said that this ammunition was sent by a grocer in the Faubourg St. Antoine of the name of Pepin. The only lantern in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and all those in the surrounding streets, were broken. Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac directed everything, and now two barricades were erected simultaneously, both of which were supported by Corinth and formed a square; the larger one closed the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and the smaller the Rue Mondétour on the side of the Rue du Cygne. This latter barricade, which was very narrow, was merely made of barrels and paving-stones. There were about fifty workmen there, of whom thirty were armed with guns, for on the road they had borrowed a gunsmith's entire stock.

Nothing could be stranger or more motley than this group; one had a sleeved waistcoat, a cavalry sabre, and a pair of holster pistols, another was in shirt sleeves, with a round hat, and a powder-flask hung at his side, while a third was cuirassed with nine sheets of gray paper, and was armed with a saddler's awl. There was one who shouted, "Let us exterminate to the last, and die on the point of our bayonet!" This man had no bayonet. Another displayed over his coat the belts and pouch of a National Guard, with these words sewn in red worsted on the cover—"public order." There were many muskets, bearing the number of legions, few hats, no neckties, a great many bare arms, and a few pikes; add to this all ages, all faces, short pale youths, and bronzed labourers at the docks. All were in a hurry, and while assisting each other, talked about the possible chances—that they were sure of one regiment, and Paris would rise. These were terrible remarks, with which a sort of cordial joviality was mingled; they might have been taken for brothers, though they did not know each other's names. Great dangers have this



beauty about them, that they throw light on the fraternity of strangers.

A fire was lighted in the kitchen, and men were melting in a bullet-mould, bowls, spoons, forks, and all the pewter articles of the public-house. They drank while doing this, and caps and slugs lay pell-mell on the table with glasses of wine. In the billiard-room Ma'am Hucheloup, Matelotte, and Gibelotte, variously affected by terror,—as one was brutalised by it, another had her breath stopped, while the third was awakened—were tearing up old sheets and making lint. Three insurgents helped them, three hairy, bearded, and moustached fellows, who pulled the linen asunder with the fingers of a sempstress, and who made them tremble. The tall man, whom Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Enjolras had noticed, as he joined the band at the corner of the Rue des Billettes, was working at the small barricade, and making himself useful. Gavroche was working at the large one, and as for the young man who had waited for Courfeyrac at his lodgings and asked after M. Marius, he disappeared just about the time when the omnibus was overthrown.

Gavroche, who was perfectly radiant, had taken the arrangements on himself; he came, went, ascended, descended, went up again, rustled and sparkled. He seemed to be there for the encouragement of all; had he a spur? certainly in his misery: had he wings? certainly in his joy. Gavroche was a whirlwind, he was seen incessantly and heard constantly, and he filled the air, being everywhere at once. He was a sort of almost irritating ubiquity, and it was impossible to stop with him. The enormous barricade felt him on its crupper; he annoyed the idlers, excited the slothful, reanimated the fatigued, vexed the thoughtful, rendered some gay, and gave others time to breathe, set some in a passion, and all in motion; he piqued a student and stung a workman, he halted, then started again, flew over the turmoil and the efforts, leapt from one to the other, murmured, buzzed, and harassed the whole team; he was the fly of the immense revolutionary coach. Perpetual movement was in his little arms, and perpetual clamour in his little lungs.

“Push ahead; more paving-stones, more barrels, more vehicles! where are there any? We want a hod-load of plaster to stop up this hole. Your barricade is very small, and must mount. Put everything into it, smash up the



house ; a barricade is Mother Gibou's tea. Hilloh ! there's a glass door."

This made the workmen exclaim :

"A glass door ! what would you have us do with that ?"

"A glass door in a harricade is excellent," said Gavroche, "for, though it does not prevent the attack, it bothers them in taking it. Have you never boned apples over a wall on which there was broken glass ? A glass door will cut the corns of the National Guards when they try to climb up the barricade. By Job ! glass is treacherous. Well, you fellows have no very bright imagination."

He was furious with his useless pistol, and went from one to the other, saying, "A gun ! I want a gun ! Why don't you give me a gun ?"

"A gun for you ?" said Combeferre.

"Well, why not ?" Gavroche answered ; "I had one in 1830, when we quarrelled with Charles X."

Enjolras shrugged his shoulders.

"When all the men have guns we will give them to boys."

Gavroche turned fiercely, and answered him :

"If you are killed before me I will take yours."

"Gamin !" said Enjolras.

"Puppy !" said Gavroche.

The journals of the day which stated that the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, that "almost impregnable fortress," as they called it, reached the level of a first-floor, are mistaken, for the truth is, that it did not exceed an average height of six or seven feet. It was so built that the combatants could, at will, either disappear behind it or ascend to its crest, by means of a quadruple row of paving-stones arranged like steps inside. Externally the front of the barricade, composed of piles of paving-stones and barrels, held together by joists and planks, passed through the wheels of the truck and the omnibus, had a bristling and inextricable appearance. A gap, sufficiently wide for one man to pass, was left between the house wall and the end of the barricade farthest from the wine-shop, so that a sortie was possible. The pole of the omnibus was held upright by ropes, and a red flag fixed to this pole floated over the barricade. The small Mondétour barricade, concealed behind the wine-shop, could not be seen, but the two barricades combined formed a real redoubt. Enjolras and Courfeyrac had not thought it advisable to barricade the other portion of the Rue Mondétour, which opens on

to the markets, as they doubtless wished to maintain a possible communication with the outside, and had but little fear of being attacked by the difficult and dangerous Rue des Prêcheurs. With the exception of this issue left free, which constituted what Foulard would have called in a strategic style, a zigzag, and of the narrow passage in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the interior of the barricade, in which the wine-shop formed a salient angle, presented an irregular quadrilateral, enclosed on all sides. There was a space of twenty yards between the great barricade and the tall houses which formed the end of the street, so that it might be said that the barricade leant against these houses, which were all inhabited, but closed from top to bottom.

All this labour was completed without any obstacle, in less than an hour, during which this handful of men had not seen a single bearskin-cap or bayonet. The few citizens who still ventured at this moment of riot into the Rue St. Denis took a glance into the Rue de la Chanvrerie, perceived the barricade, and doubled their pace. When the two barricades were completed and the flag was hoisted, a table was pulled from the wine-shop into the street, and Courfeyrac got upon it. Enjolras brought up the square chest, which Courfeyrac opened, and it proved to be full of cartridges. When they saw these cartridges the bravest trembled, and there was a moment's silence. Courfeyrac distributed the cartridges smilingly, and each received thirty : many had powder, and began making others with the bullets which had been cast ; as for the powder barrel, it was on a separate table, near the door, and was held in reserve. The assembly, which was traversing the whole of Paris, did not cease, but in the end it had become a monotonous sound, to which they no longer paid any attention. This noise at one moment retired, at another came nearer, with lugubrious undulations. The guns and carbines were loaded altogether, without precipitation and with a solemn gravity. Enjolras then stationed three sentries outside the barricades, one in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the second in the Rue des Prêcheurs, the third at the corner of the Petite Truanderie. Then, when the barricades were built, the posts assigned, the guns loaded, the sentries set, the insurgents alone in these formidable streets, through which no one now passed, surrounded by dumb and, as it were, dead houses, in which no human movement palpitated, enveloped in the menacing darkness, in the midst of that



silence and obscurity in which they felt something advancing, and which had something tragical and terrifying about it, isolated, armed, determined, and tranquil, they waited.

During the hours of waiting, what did they do? we are bound to tell it, because this is historical. While the men were making cartridges and the women lint, while a large stewpan full of melted tin and lead, intended for the bullet-mould, was smoking on a red-hot chafing-dish, while the vedettes were watching with shouldered guns on the barricade, while Enjolras, whom it was impossible to distract, watched the vedettes, Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, and a few others, assembled, as in the most peaceful days of their student conversations, and in one corner of the wine-shop converted into a casemate, two paces from the barricade which they had raised, and with their loaded and primed muskets leaning against the back of their chairs, these fine young men, so near their last hour, wrote love verses. The hour, the spot, the recollections of youth recalled, a few stars which were beginning to glisten in the sky, the funereal repose of these deserted streets, the imminence of the inexorable adventure which was preparing, gave a pathetic charm to the verses murmured in a low voice in the twilight by Jean Prouvaire, who, as we said, was a gentle poet.

In the meanwhile a lamp had been lit on the small barricade, and on the large one, one of those wax torches such as may be seen on Shrove Tuesday in front of the vehicles crowded with masks that are proceeding to the Courtille. These torches, we know, came from the Faubourg St. Antoine. The torch was placed in a species of lantern of paving-stones closed on three sides to protect it from the wind, and arranged so that the entire light should fall on the flag. The street and the barricade remained plunged in darkness, and nothing was visible save the red flag formidably illumined, as if by an enormous dark lantern. This light added a strange and terrible purple to the scarlet of the flag.

Night had quite set in, and nothing occurred, only confused rumours and fusillades now and then could be heard, but they were rare, badly maintained, and distant. This respite, which was prolonged, was a sign that the Government was taking its time and collecting its strength. These fifty men were waiting for the coming of sixty thousand. Enjolras was attacked by that impatience which seizes on



powerful minds when they stand on the threshold of formidable events. He looked up Gavroche, who was busy manufacturing cartridges in the ground-floor room, by the dubious light of two candles placed on the bar for precaution, on account of the gunpowder sprinkled over the tables. These two candles threw no rays outside, and the insurgents allowed no light in the upper floors. Gavroche was at this moment greatly occupied, though not precisely with his cartridge.

The recruit from the Rue des Billettes had come into the room and seated himself at the least-lighted table. A Brown Bess of the large model had fallen to his share, and he held it between his legs. Gavroche up to this moment, distracted by a hundred "amusing" things, had not even seen this man. When he entered, Gavroche looked after him, mechanically admiring his musket, but when the man was seated, the gamin suddenly rose. Those who might have watched this man would have noticed him observe everything in the barricade, and the band of insurgents, with singular attention, but when he entered the room he fell into a state of contemplation, and seemed to see nothing of what was going on. The gamin approached this pensive man, and began walking round him on tiptoe, in the same way as people move round a man whom they are afraid of awaking. At the same time all the grimaces of an old man passed over his childish face, at once so impudent and so serious, so giddy and so profound, so gay and so affecting, and these grimaces signified, "Oh, stuff! it is not possible, I must see double—I am dreaming—can it be?—no, it is not—yes, it is—no, it is not." Gavroche balanced himself on his heels, clenched his fists in his pockets, moved his neck like a bird, and expended on an enormously outstretched lip all the sagacity of a lower lip. He was stupefied, uncertain, convinced, and dazzled. All about him was at work, the instinct that scents and the intellect that combines; it was plain that an event was happening to Gavroche. It was when he was deepest in thought that Enjolras accosted him.

"You are little," he said, "and will not be seen. Go out of the barricades, slip along the houses, pass through as many streets as you can, and come back to tell me what is going on."

Gavroche drew himself up.

"So little ones are good for something! that's lucky! I'm off. In the meanwhile trust the little and distrust



the big," and Gavroche, raising his head and dropping his voice, added, as he pointed to the man of the Rue des Billettes :

" You see that tall fellow ? "

" Well ? "

" He's a spy. "

" Are you sure ? "

" Not a fortnight back he pulled me down by the ear from the cornice of the Pont Royal where I was taking the air. "

Enjolras hurriedly left the gamin and whispered a few words to a labourer from the wine-docks who was present. The labourer went out and returned almost immediately, followed by three others. The four men, four broad-shouldered porters, stationed themselves silently behind the table at which the man was seated, in evident readiness to fall upon him, and then Enjolras walked up to the man and asked him :

" Who are you ? "

At this sudden question the man started, he looked into the depths of Enjolras's candid eyeballs, and seemed to read his thoughts. He gave a smile, which was at once the most disdainful, energetic, and resolute possible, and answered, with a haughty gravity :

" I see what you mean,—well, yes ! "

" Are you a spy ? "

" I am an agent of the authority ! "

" And your name is—— ? "

" Javert. "

Enjolras gave the four men a sign, and in a twinkling, before Javert had time to turn round, he was collared, thrown down, bound, and searched. They found on him a small round card fixed between two pieces of glass, and bearing on one side the arms of France, with the motto, " Surveillance and vigilance," and on the other this notice, " JAVERT, police Inspector. fifty-two years of age," and the signature of the Prefect of Police of that day, M. Gisquet. He had also a watch and a purse containing some pieces of gold, and both were left him. Behind his watch at the bottom of his fob a paper was found, which Enjolras unfolded, and on which he read these lines, written by the Prefect of Police himself :

" So soon as his political mission is concluded, Javert will assure himself by a special watch whether it is true

that criminals assemble on the slope of the right bank of the Seine, near the bridge of Jena."

When the search was ended Javert was raised from the ground, his arms were tied behind his back, and he was fastened in the middle of the room to the celebrated post, which in olden times gave its name to the wine-shop. Gavroche, who had watched the whole scene and approved of everything with a silent shake of the head, went up to Javert, and said :

"The mouse has trapped the cat."

All this took place so quickly that it was completed before those outside the wine-shop were aware of it. Javert had not uttered a cry, but, on seeing him fastened to the post, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Combeferre, Joly, and the men scattered over the two barricades, flocked in. Javert, who was surrounded with cords so that he could not stir, raised his head with the intrepid serenity of a man who has never told a falsehood.

"It is a spy," said Enjolras, and turning to Javert, "You will be shot two minutes before the barricade is taken."

Javert replied, with his most imperious accent :

"Why not at once?"

"We are saving of powder."

"Then settle the affair with a knife."

"Spy," said the beautiful Enjolras, "we are judges, and not assassins."

Then he called Gavroche.

"You be off now and do what I told you."

"I am off," Gavroche cried, but stopped just as he reached the door.

"By the way, you will give me his gun. I leave you the musician but I want his clarionette."

The gamin gave a military salute, and gaily slipped round the large barricade.

The tragical picture we have undertaken would not be complete, the reader would not see in their exact and real relief those great moments of social lying-in and revolutionary giving birth, in which there is convulsion blended with effort, if we were to omit in our sketch an incident full of an epic and savage horror which occurred almost immediately after Gavroche's departure.

Bands of rioters, it is well known, resemble snowballs, and, as they roll along, agglomerate many tumultuous men, who do not ask each other whence they come.



Among the passers-by who joined the band led by Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac, there was a man wearing a porter's jacket, much worn at the shoulders, who gesticulated and vociferated, and had the appearance of a drunken savage. This man, whose name or nickname was Le Cabuc, and entirely unknown to those who pretended to know him, was seated, in a state of real or feigned intoxication, with four others, round a table which they had dragged out of the wine-shop. This Cabuc, while making the others drink, seemed to be gazing thoughtfully at the large house behind the barricade, whose five storeys commanded the whole street, and faced the Rue St. Denis. All at once he exclaimed :

"Do you know what, comrades? we must fire from that house. When we are at the windows, hang me if any one can come up the street."

"Yes, but the house is closed," said one of the drinkers.

"We'll knock."

"They won't open."

"Then we'll break in the door."

Le Cabuc ran up to the door, which had a very massive knocker, and rapped; as the door was not opened he rapped again, and no one answering, he gave a third rap, but the silence continued.

"Is there any one in here?" Le Cabuc shouted. But nothing stirred, and so he seized a musket and began hammering the door with the butt end. It was an old, low, narrow, solid door, made of oak, lined with sheet-iron inside and heavy bars, and a thorough postern gate. The blows made the whole house tremble, but did not shake the door. The inhabitants, however, were probably alarmed, for a little square trap-window was at length lit up and opened on the third storey, and a candle and the gray-haired head of a terrified old man, who was the porter, appeared in the orifice. The man who was knocking left off.

"What do you want, gentlemen?" the porter asked.

"Open the door!" said Le Cabuc.

"I cannot, gentlemen."

"Open, I tell you!"

"It is impossible, gentlemen."

Le Cabuc raised his musket and took aim at the porter, but as he was below and it was very dark, the porter did not notice the fact.

"Will you open? yes or no."

"No, gentlemen."

"You really mean it?"

"I say no, my kind——"

The porter did not finish the sentence, for the musket was fired; the bullet entered under his chin and came out of his neck, after passing through the jugular vein. The old man fell in a heap, without heaving a sigh, the candle went out, and nothing was visible save a motionless head lying on the sill of the window, and a small wreath of smoke ascending to the roof.

"There," said Le Cabuc, as he let the butt of his musket fall on the pavement again.

He had scarce uttered the word ere he felt a hand laid on his shoulder with the tenacity of an eagle's talon, and he heard a voice saying to him:

"On your knees!"

The murderer turned, and saw before him Enjolras's white, cold face. Enjolras held a pistol in his hand. He had hurried up on hearing the shot fired, and clutched with his left hand Le Cabuc's blouse, shirt, and braces.

"On your knees!" he repeated.

And with a sovereign movement the frail young man of twenty bent, like a reed, the muscular and robust porter, and forced him to kneel in the mud. La Cabuc tried to resist, but he seemed to have been seized by a superhuman hand. Enjolras, pale, barenecked, with his dishevelled hair and feminine face, had at that moment an inexpressible something of the ancient Themis. His dilated nostrils, his downcast eyes, gave to his implacable Greek profile that expression of wrath and that expression of chastity which, in the opinion of the old world, are becoming to justice. All the insurgents ran up, and then ranged themselves in a circle at a distance, feeling that it was impossible for them to utter a word in the presence of what they were going to see. Le Cabuc, conquered, no longer attempted to struggle, and trembled all over: Enjolras loosed his grasp, and took out his watch.

"Pray or think!" he said, "you have one minute to do so."

"Mercy!" the murderer stammered, then hung his head and muttered a few inarticulate execrations.

Enjolras did not take his eyes off his watch; he let the minute pass, and then put the watch again in his fob. This done, he seized Le Cabuc by the hair, who clung to his



knees with a yell, and placed the muzzle of the pistol to his ear. Many of these intrepid men, who had so tranquilly entered upon the most frightful of adventures, turned away their heads. The explosion was heard, the assassin fell on his head on the pavement, and Enjolras drew himself up, and looked round him with a stern air of conviction. Then he kicked the corpse and said :

“ Throw this outside.”

Three men raised the body of the wretch, which was still writhing in the last mechanical convulsions of expiring life, and threw it over the small barricade into the Mondétour lane. Enjolras stood pensive ; some grand darkness was slowly spreading over his formidable serenity. Presently he raised his voice, and all were silent.

“ Citizens,” said Enjolras, “ what that man did is frightful, and what I have done is horrible ; he killed, and that is why I killed, and I was obliged to do so, as insurrection must have its discipline. Assassination is even more of a crime here than elsewhere, for we stand under the eye of the Revolution, we are the priests of the Republic, we are the sacred victims to duty, and we must not do aught that would calumniate our combat. I, therefore, tried and condemned this man to death ; for my part, constrained to do what I have done, but abhorring it, I have also tried myself, and you will shortly see what sentence I have passed.”

All who listened trembled.

“ We will share your fate,” Combeferre exclaimed.

“ Be it so !” Enjolras continued. “ One word more. In executing that man I obeyed Necessity ; but Necessity is a monster of the old world, and its true name is Fatality. Now it is the law of progress that monsters should disappear before angels, and Fatality vanish before Fraternity. It is a bad moment to utter the word love, but no matter, I utter it, and I glorify it. Love, thou hast a future ; Death I make use of thee, but I abhor thee. Citizens, in the future there will be no darkness, no thunder-claps ; neither ferocious ignorance, nor bloodthirsty retaliation ; and as there will be no Satan left, there will be no St. Michael. In the future no man will kill another man, the earth will be radiant, and the human race will love. The day will come, citizens, when all will be concord, harmony, light, joy, and life, and we are going to die in order that it may come.”

Enjolras was silent, his virgin lips closed, and he stood for some time at the spot where he had shed blood, in the

motionlessness of a marble statue. His fixed eyes caused people to talk in whispers around him. Jean Prouvaire and Combeferre shook their heads silently, and leaning against each other in an angle of the barricade, gazed, with an admiration in which there was compassion, at this grave young man, who was an executioner and priest, and had at the same time the light and the hardness of crystal. Let us say at once, that after the action, when the corpses were conveyed to the Morgue and searched, a police-agent's card was found on Le Cabuc; the author of this work had in his hands in 1848 the special report on this subject made to the Prefect of Police in 1832. Let us add that, if we may believe a strange but probably well-founded police tradition, Le Cabuc was Claquesous. It is certainly true that after the death of Cabuc Claquesous was never heard of again, and left no trace of his disappearance. He seemed to have become amalgamated with the invisible; his life had been gloom, and his end was night. The whole insurgent band were still suffering from the emotion of this tragical trial, so quickly begun and so quickly ended, when Courfeyrac saw again at the barricade the small young man who had come to his lodgings to ask for Marius. This lad, who had a bold and reckless look, had come at night to rejoin the insurgents.

## CHAPTER XCVII.

THE voice which summoned Marius through the twilight to the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie had produced on him the effect of the voice of destiny. He wished to die, and the opportunity offered; he rapped at the door of the tomb, and a hand held out the key to him from the shadows. Such gloomy openings in the darkness just in front of despair are tempting; Marius removed the bar which had so often allowed him to pass, left the garden, and said, "I will go." Mad with grief, feeling nothing fixed and solid in his brain, incapable of accepting anything henceforth of destiny, after the two months spent in the intoxication of youth and love, and crushed by all the reveries of despair at once, he had only one wish left—to finish with it all at once. He began walking rapidly, and he happened to be armed, as he had Javert's pistols in his pocket. The young man whom he fancied that he had seen had got out of his sight in the streets.



Marius, who left the Rue Plumet by the boulevard, crossed the esplanade and bridge of the Invalides, the Champs Elysées, the square of Louis XV., and reached the Rue de Rivoli. The shops were open there, the gas blazed under the arcades, ladies were making purchases, and people were eating ices at the Café Laiter, and cakes at the English pastrycook's. A few post-chaises, however, were leaving at a gallop the Hôtel des Princes and Meurice's. Marius entered the Rue St. Honoré by the passage Delorme. The shops were closed there, the tradesmen were conversing before their open doors, people walked along, the lamps were lighted, and from the first-floor upwards the houses were illumined as usual. Cavalry were stationed on the square of the Palais Royal. Marius followed the Rue St. Honoré, and the farther he got from the Palais Royal the fewer windows were lit up; the shops were entirely closed, nobody was conversing on the thresholds, the street grew darker, and at the same time the crowd denser, for the passers-by had now become a crowd. No one could be heard speaking in the crowd, and yet a hollow, deep buzzing issued from it. Near the Arbre sec Fountain there were mobs motionless, and sombre groups standing among the comers and goers like stones in the middle of a running stream. At the entrance of the Rue des Pouvaires, the crowd no longer moved, it was a resisting, solid, compact, almost impenetrable mob of persons packed together and conversing in a low voice. There were hardly any black coats or round hats present, only fustian jackets, blouses, caps, and bristling beards. This multitude undulated confusedly in the night mist, and its whispering had the hoarse accent of a rustling, and though no one moved, a tramping in the mud could be heard. Beyond this dense crowd there was not a window lit up in the surrounding streets, and the solitary and decreasing rows of lanterns could only be seen in them. The street-lanterns of that day resembled large red stars suspended from ropes, and cast on to the pavement a shadow which had the shape of a large spider. These streets, however, were not deserted, and piled muskets, moving bayonets, and troops bivouacking could be distinguished in them. No curious person went beyond this limit, and circulation ceased there; there the mob ended and the army began.

Marius willed with the will of a man who no longer hopes ;



he had been summoned and was bound to go. He found means to traverse the crowd and bivouacking troops; he hid himself from the patrols and avoided the sentries. He made a circuit, came to the Rue de Béthisy, and proceeded in the direction of the markets; at the corner of the Rue des Bourdonnais the lanterns ceased. After crossing the zone of the mob he passed the border of troops, and now found himself in something frightful. There was not a wayfarer, nor a soldier, nor a light, nothing but solitude, silence, and night, and a strangely-piercing cold; entering a street was like entering a cellar. Still he continued to advance; some one ran close past him; was it a man? a woman? were there more than one? He could not have said, for it had passed and vanished. By constant circuits he reached a lane, which he judged to be the Rue de la Poterie, and toward the middle of that lane he came across an obstacle. He stretched out his hands and found that it was an overturned cart, and his feet recognised pools of water, holes, scattered and piled-up paving-stones—it was a barricade which had been begun and then abandoned. He clambered over the stones and soon found himself on the other side of the obstacle; he walked very close to the posts, and felt his way along the house walls. A little beyond the barricade he fancied that he could see something white before him, and on drawing nearer it assumed a form. It was a pair of white horses, the omnibus horses unharnessed by Bossuet in the morning, which had wandered, haphazard, from street to street all day, and at last stopped here, with the stolid patience of animals which no more comprehend the actions of man than man comprehends the actions of Providence. Marius left the horses behind him, and as he entered a street which seemed to be the Rue du Contrat-social, a musket-shot, which came, no one could say whence, and traversed the darkness at hazard, whizzed close past him, and pierced above his head a copper shaving-dish, hanging from a hairdresser's shop. In 1846, this dish with the hole in it was still visible at the corner of the pillars of the markets. This shot was still life, but from this moment nothing further occurred; the whole itineracy resembled a descent down black steps, but for all that Marius did not the less advance.

Any being hovering over Paris at this moment, with the wings of a bat or an owl, would have had a gloomy spectacle under his eyes. The entire old district of the



markets, which is like a city within a city, which is traversed by the Rues St. Denis and St. Martin, and by a thousand lanes which the insurgents had converted into their redoubt and arsenal, would have appeared like an enormous black hole dug in the centre of Paris. Here the eye settled on an abyss, and, owing to the broken lamps and the closed shutters, all brilliancy, life, noise, and movement had ceased in it. The invisible police of the revolt were watching everywhere and maintaining order, that is to say, night. To hide the small number in a vast obscurity, and to multiply each combatant by the possibilities which this obscurity contains, is the necessary tactics of the insurrection, and at nightfall every window in which a candle gleamed received a bullet; the light was extinguished, and sometimes the occupant killed. Hence, nothing stirred; there was nought but terror, mourning, and stupor in the houses, and in the streets a sort of sacred horror.

As often happens, nature seemed to have come to an understanding with what men were going to do, and nothing deranged the mournful harmonies of the whole scene. The stars had disappeared, and heavy clouds filled the entire horizon with their melancholy masses. There was a black sky over these dead streets, as if an intense pall were cast over the immense tomb. While a thoroughly political battle was preparing on the same site which had already witnessed so many revolutionary events,—while the youth, the secret associations, and the schools, in the name of principles, and the middle classes in the name of interests, were coming together to try a final fall,—while everybody was hurrying up and appealing to the last and decisive hour of the crisis, in the distance and beyond that fatal district, at the lowest depths of the unfathomable cavities of that old wretched Paris, which is disappearing under the splendour of happy and opulent Paris, the gloomy voice of the people could be heard hoarsely growling.

Marius had reached the markets; there all was calmer, darker, and even more motionless than in the neighbouring streets. It seemed as if the frozen peace of the tomb had issued from the ground and spread over the sky. A ruddy tinge, however, brought out from the black background the tall roofs of the houses which barred the Rue de la Chanvrerie on the side of St. Eustache. It was the reflection of the torch burning on the Corinth barricade, and Marius walked toward that ruddy hue; it led him to the Marché-aux-



Poirées, and he caught a glimpse of the Rue des Prêcheurs, into which he turned. The sentry of the insurgents watching at the other end did not notice him; he felt himself quite close to what he was seeking, and he walked on tiptoe. He thus reached the corner of that short piece of the Mondétour lane which was, as will be remembered, the sole communication which Enjolras had maintained with the outer world. At the corner of the last house on his left, he stopped and peeped into the lane. A little beyond the dark corner formed by the lane and the Rue de la Chanvrerie, which formed a large patch of shadow, in which he was himself buried, he noticed a little light on the pavement, a portion of a wine-shop, a lamp flickering in a sort of shapeless niche, and men crouching down with guns on their knees,—all this was scarce ten yards from him, and was the interior of the barricade. The houses that lined the right-hand side of the lane hid from him the rest of the wine-shop, the large barricade, and the flag. Marius had but one step to take, and then the unhappy young man sat down on a post, folded his arms, and thought of his father.

He thought of that heroic Colonel Pontmercy, who had been such a proud soldier, who had defended under the Republic the frontier of France, and reached under the Emperor the frontier of Asia; who had seen Genoa, Alessandria, Milan, Turin, Madrid, Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, and Moscow; who had left on all the victorious battlefields of Europe drops of the same blood which Marius had in his veins; who had grown gray before his time in discipline and command; who had lived with his waistbelt buckled, his epaulettes falling on his chest, his cockade blackened by smoke, his brow wrinkled by his helmet, in barracks, in camp, in bivouacs, and in hospitals, and who, at the expiration of twenty years, had returned from the great wars with his scarred cheek and smiling face, simple, tranquil, admirable, pure as an infant, having done everything for France, and nothing against her. He said to himself that his own day had now arrived, that his hour had at length struck, that after his father, he too was going to be brave, intrepid, and bold, to rush to meet bullets, offer his chest to the bayonets, shed his blood, seek the enemy, seek death; that he, in his turn, was about to wage war and go into the battlefield, and that the battle he would enter was the street, and the war he was about to wage



civil war! He saw civil war opening like a gulf before him, and that he was going to fall into it; then he shuddered.

He thought of his father's sword, which his grandfather had sold to the old clothes-dealer, and which he had so painfully regretted. He said to himself that this valiant and chaste sword had done well to escape from him, and disappear angrily in the darkness; that it fled away thus because it was intelligent, and foresaw the future,—the riots, the war of gutters, the war of paving-stones, fusillades from cellar-traps, and blows dealt and received from behind; that, coming from Marengo and Austerlitz, it was unwilling to go to the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and after what it had done with the father refused to do that with the son! He said to himself that if that sword had been here, if, after receiving it at his dead father's bedside, he had dared to take it, and carry it into this nocturnal combat between Frenchmen in the streets, it would assuredly have burned his hands, and have flashed before him like the sword of the archangel! He said to himself that it was fortunate it was not there, and that it had disappeared,—that this was well, this was just, that his grandfather had been the true guardian of his father's glory, and that it was better for the Colonel's sword to have been put up for auction, sold to the second-hand dealer, or broken up as old iron, than come to-day to make the flank of the country bleed. And then he began weeping bitterly. It was horrible, but what was he to do? he could not live without Cosette, and since she had departed all that was left him was to die. Had he not pledged her his word of honour that he would die? She had gone away knowing this, and it was plain that she was pleased with Marius' dying; and then it was clear that she no longer loved him, since she had gone away thus without warning him, without a word, without a letter, and yet she knew his address! Of what use was it to live? and why should he live now? And then, to have come so far and then recoil! to have approached the danger and run away! to have come to look at the barricade and then slip off! to slip off, trembling and saying, "After all, I have had enough of that. I have seen it; that is sufficient. It is civil war; and I will be off!" To abandon his friends who expected him, who perhaps had need of him, who were a handful against an army! To be false to everything at once,—to love, to friendship, to his word! to give his poltroonery the pretext



of patriotism! Oh, that was impossible; and if his father's phantom were there in the shadows, and saw him recoil, it would lash him with the flat of its sabre, and cry to him, "Forward, coward!"

A prey to this oscillation of his thoughts, he hung his head, but suddenly raised it again, for a species of splendid rectification had just taken place in his mind. There is a dilatation of thought peculiar to the vicinity of the tomb; and to be near death makes a man see correctly. The vision of the action upon which he saw himself perhaps on the point of entering, no longer appeared to him lamentable, but superb; the street was transfigured by some internal labour of the soul, before his mental eye. All the tumultuous notes of interrogation of reverie crowded back upon him, but without troubling him; and he did not leave a single one unanswered. Why would his father be indignant? are there not cases in which insurrection attains to the dignity of duty? what was there degrading for the son of Colonel Pontmercy in the combat which was about to commence? It is no longer Montmirail or Champaubert, it is something else; it is no longer a question of a sacred territory, but of a holy idea.

No one but will have noticed in himself that the mind—and this is the marvel of its unity complicated with ubiquity—has the strange aptitude of reasoning almost coldly in the most violent extremities, and it often happens that weird passions and deep despair, in the very agony of their blackest soliloquies, handle subjects and discuss theses. Logic is mingled with the convulsion, and the thread of syllogism runs without breaking through the storm of the thoughts:—such was Marius' state of mind. While thinking thus, crushed, but resolute, and yet hesitating and shuddering at what he was going to do, his eyes wandered about the interior of the barricade. The insurgents were conversing in whispers, without moving, and that almost silence which marks the last phase of expectation was perceptible. Above them at a third-floor window, Marius distinguished a species of spectator or witness, who seemed singularly attentive,—it was the porter killed by Le Cabuc. From below, this head could be vaguely perceived in the reflection of the torch burning on the barricade, and nothing was stranger in this dense and vacillating light than this motionless, livid, and amazed face, with its bristling hair, open and fixed eyes, and gaping mouth, bending over the



street in an attitude of curiosity. One would have said that he who was dead was contemplating those who were going to die. A long stream of blood which had flowed from his head, descended from the window to the first floor, where it stopped.

## CHAPTER XCVIII.

Nothing came yet: it had struck ten by St. Merry's, and Enjolras and Combeferre were sitting, musket in hand, near the sally port of the great barricade. They did not speak, but were listening, trying to catch the dullest and most remote sound of marching. Suddenly, in the midst of this lugubrious calm, a clear, young, gay voice, which seemed to come from the Rue St. Denis, burst forth, and began singing distinctly, to the old popular tune of *Au clair de la lune*, these lines, terminating with a cry that resembled a cock-crow.

Mon nez est en larmes,  
Mon ami Bugeaud,  
Prêt-moi tes gendarmes  
Pour leur dire un mot.  
En capote bleue,  
La poule au shako,  
Voici la banlieue !  
Co-cocorico !

They grasped each other by the hand.

"It is Gavroche," said Enjolras.

"He is warning us," said Combeferre.

Hurried footsteps troubled the deserted streets, and a being more active than a clown was seen climbing over the omnibus, and Gavroche leaped into the square, out of breath, and saying :

"My gun ! here they are."

An electric thrill ran along the whole barricade, and the movement of hands seeking guns was heard.

"Will you have my carbine?" Enjolras asked the gamin.

"I want the big gun," Gavroche answered ; and he took Javert's musket.

Two sentries had fallen back and come in almost simultaneously with Gavroche ; they were those from the end of the street and the Petite Truanderie. The vedette in the *lane des Prêcheurs* remained at his post, which indicated

that nothing was coming from the direction of the bridges and the markets. The Rue de la Chanvrerie, in which a few paving-stones were scarce visible in the reflection of the light cast on the flag, offered to the insurgents the aspect of a large black gate vaguely opening into a cloud of smoke. Every man proceeded to his post : forty-three insurgents, among whom were Enjolras, Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, and Gavroche, knelt behind the great barricade, with the muzzles of their guns and carbines thrust out between the paving-stones as through loopholes, attentive, silent, and ready to fire. Six, commanded by Feuilly, installed themselves at the upper windows of Corinth. Some minutes more elapsed, and then a measured, heavy tramp of many feet was distinctly heard from the direction of St. Leu. This noise, at first faint, then precise, and then heavy and re-echoing, approached slowly, without halt or interruption, and with a tranquil and terrible continuity. Nothing was audible but this. It was at once the silence and noise of the statue of the commendatore. But the stormy footfall had something enormous and multiple about it, which aroused the idea of a multitude at the same time as that of a spectre ; you might have fancied that you heard the fearful statue Legion on the march. The tramp came nearer, nearer still, and then ceased ; and the breathing of many men seemed to be audible at the end of the street. Nothing, however, was visible ; though quite at the end in the thick gloom could be distinguished a multitude of metallic threads, fine as needles and almost imperceptible, which moved about like that indescribable phosphoric network which we perceive under our closed eyelids just at the moment when we are falling asleep. These were bayonets and musket barrels on which the reflection of the torch confusedly fell. There was another pause, as if both sides were waiting. All at once a voice, which was the more sinister because no one could be seen, and because it seemed as if the darkness itself was speaking, shouted :

“ Who goes there ? ”

At the same time the click of muskets being cocked could be heard. Enjolras replied with a sonorous and haughty accent :

“ The French Revolution ! ”

“ Fire ! ” the voice commanded.

A flash lit up all the frontages in the street, as if the door of a furnace had been suddenly opened, then shut. ▲



frightful shower of bullets hurled against the barricade, and the flag fell. The discharge had been so violent and dense that it had cut the staff asunder, that is to say, the extreme point of the omnibus pole. Bullets ricochetting from the corners of the houses, penetrated the barricade, and wounded several men. The impression produced by this first discharge was chilling. The attack was rude, and of a nature to make the boldest think. It was plain that they had to do with a whole regiment at least.

"Comrades," Courfeyrac cried, "let us not waste our powder, but wait till they have entered the street before returning their fire."

"And before all," Enjolras said, "let us hoist the flag again!"

He picked up the flag, which had fallen at his feet. They heard from without the ring of ramrods in barrels: the troops were reloading. Enjolras continued:

"Who has a brave heart among us? who will plant the flag on the barricade again?"

Not one replied, for to mount the barricade at this moment, when all the guns were doubtless again aimed at it, was simply death, and the bravest man hesitates to condemn himself. Enjolras even shuddered as he repeated:

"Will no one offer?"

Since they had arrived at Corinth and had commenced building the barricade, no one had paid any further attention to Father Maboëuf. M. Maboëuf, however, had not quitted the insurgents. He had gone into the ground-floor room of the wine-shop and seated himself behind the bar, where he was, so to speak, annihilated in himself. He seemed no longer to see or think. Courfeyrac and others had twice or thrice accosted him, warning him of the peril, and begging him to withdraw, but he had not appeared to hear them. When no one was speaking to him his lips moved as if he were answering some one, and so soon as people addressed him, his lips left off moving, and his eyes no longer seemed alive. A few hours before the barricade was attacked he had assumed a posture which he had not quitted since, with his two hands on his knees, and his head bent forward, as if he were looking into a precipice. Nothing could have drawn him out of this attitude, and it did not appear as if his mind were in the barricade. When every one else went to his post the only persons left in the room were Javert tied to the post, an insurgent with drawn sabre watching over

Javert, and Mabœuf. At the moment of the attack, at the detonation, the physical shock affected, and, as it were, awoke him: he suddenly rose, crossed the room, and at the moment when Enjolras repeated his appeal, "Does no one offer?" the old man was seen on the threshold of the wine-shop. His presence produced a species of commotion in the groups, and the cry was raised:

"It is the voter, the conventionalist, the representative of the people!"

He probably did not hear it: he walked straight up to Enjolras, the insurgents making way for him with a religious fear, tore the flag from Enjolras, who recoiled with petrification, and then, no one daring to arrest or help him, this old man of eighty, with shaking head, but firm step, slowly began ascending the staircase of paving-stones formed inside the barricade. This was so gloomy and so grand that all around him cried, "Hats off!" With each step he ascended, the scene became more frightful, his white hair, his decrepit face, his tall, bald, and wrinkled forehead, his hollow eyes, his amazed and open mouth, and his old arm raising the red banner, stood out from the darkness and were magnified in the sanguinary brightness of the torch, and the spectators fancied they saw the spectre of '93 issuing from the ground, holding the flag of terror in its hand. When he was on the last step, when this trembling and terrible phantom, standing on the pile of ruins, in the presence of twelve hundred invisible gun-barrels, stood facing death, and as if stronger than it, the whole barricade assumed a supernatural and colossal aspect in the darkness. There was one of those silences which only occur at the sight of prodigies, and in the midst of this silence the old man brandished the red flag and cried:

"Long live the revolution! long live the republic! fraternity! equality! and death!"

A low and quick talking, like the murmur of a hurried priest galloping through a mass, was heard,—it was probably the police commissary making the legal summons at the other end of the street; then the same loud voice which had shouted "Who goes there" cried:

"Withdraw!"

M. Mabœuf, livid, haggard, with his eyeballs illumined by the mournful flames of mania, raised the flag about his head and repeated.

"Long live the republic!"



"Fire!" the voice commanded.

A second discharge, resembling a round of grapeshot, burst against the barricade; the old man sank on his knees, then rose again, let the flag slip from his hand, and fell back on the pavement like a log, with his arms stretched out like a cross. Streams of blood flowed under him, and his old, pale, melancholy face seemed to be gazing at heaven. One of those emotions stronger than man, which makes him forget self-defence, seized on the insurgents, and they approached the corpse with respectful horror.

"What men these regicides are!" said Enjolras.

Courfeyrac whispered in Enjolras's ear:

"This is only between ourselves, as I do not wish to diminish the enthusiasm, but this man was anything but a regicide. I knew him, and his name was Maboëuf. I do not know what was the matter with him to-day, but he was a brave idiot. Look at his head."

"The head of an idiot and the heart of Brutus!" Enjolras replied, then he raised his voice.

"Citizens! such is the example which the old give to the young. We hesitated and he came; we recoiled and he advanced. This is what those who tremble with old age teach those who tremble with fear! This aged man is august before his country; he has had a long life and a magnificent death! Now let us place his corpse under cover, let each of us defend this dead old man as he would defend his living father, and let his presence in the midst of us render the barricade impregnable!"

A murmur of gloomy and energetic adhesion followed these words. Enjolras bent down, raised the old man's head, and sternly kissed him on the forehead; then, stretching out his arms and handling the dead man with tender caution, as if afraid of hurting him, he took off his coat, pointed to the bloodstained holes, and said:

"This is our flag now!"

A long black shawl of Widow Hucheloup's was thrown over Father Maboëuf: six men made a litter of their muskets, the corpse was laid on them, and they carried it with bare heads and solemn slowness to a large table in the ground-floor room. These men, entirely engaged with the grave and sacred thing they were doing, did not think of the perilous situation in which they were, and when the corpse was carried past the stoical Javert, Enjolras said to the spy:

"Your turn will come soon."

During this period little Gavroche, who alone had not left his post, and had remained on the watch, fancied he could see men creeping up to the barricade: all at once he cried, "Look out!" Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Joly, Bahorel, and Bossuet, all hurried tumultuously out of the wine-shop, but it was almost too late; for they saw a flashing line of bayonets undulating on the crest of the barricade. Municipal Guards of tall stature penetrated, some by striding over the omnibus, others through the sally port, driving before them the gamin, who fell back, but did not fly. The moment was critical; it was that first formidable minute of inundation when the river rises to the level of the dam and the water begins to filter through the fissures of the dyke. One second more and the barricade had been captured. Bahorel dashed at the first Municipal Guard who entered, and killed him with a shot from his carbine; the second killed Bahorel with a bayonet-thrust. Another had already levelled Courfeyrac, who was shouting "Help!" while the tallest of all of them, a species of Colossus, was marching upon Gavroche, with his bayonet at the charge. The gamin raised in his little arms Javert's enormous musket, resolutely aimed it at the giant, and pulled the trigger. But the gun did not go off, as Javert had not loaded it: the Municipal Guard burst into a laugh, and advanced upon the lad. Before the bayonet had reached Gavroche, however, the musket fell from the soldier's hands, for a bullet struck him in the middle of the forehead, and he fell on his back. A second bullet struck the other Guard, who had attacked Courfeyrac, in the middle of the chest, and laid him low.

The shots were fired by Marius who had just entered the barricade.

Marius, still concealed at the corner of the Rue Mondétour, had watched the first phase of the combat with shuddering irresolution. Still he was unable to resist for any length of time that mysterious and sovereign dizziness which might be called the appeal from the abyss: and at the sight of the imminence of the peril, of M. Maboëuf's death, that mournful enigma, Bahorel killed, Courfeyrac shouting for help, this child menaced, and his friends to succour or revenge, all hesitation vanished, and he rushed into the medley, pistols in hand. With the first shot he saved Gavroche, and with the second delivered Courfeyrac. On



hearing the shots and the cries of the Guards, the assailants swarmed up the entrenchment, over the crest of which could now be seen more than half the bodies of Municipal Guards, troops of the line, and National Guards from the suburbs, musket in hand. They already covered more than two-thirds of the barricade, but no longer leapt down into the enclosure, and hesitated, as if they feared some snare. They looked down into the gloomy space as they would have peered into a lion's den; and the light of the torch only illumined bayonets, bearskin shakos, and anxious and irritated faces.

Marius had no longer a weapon, as he had thrown away his discharged pistols, but he had noticed the barrel of gunpowder near the door of the ground-floor room. As he half turned to look in that direction a soldier levelled his musket at him, and at the moment when the soldier was taking steady aim at Marius, a hand was laid on the muzzle of his musket and stopped it up; the young workman in the velvet trousers had rushed forward. The shot was fired, the bullet passed through the hand, and probably through the workman, for he fell, but it did not hit Marius. Marius, who was entering the wine-shop, hardly noticed this; still he had confusedly seen the gun pointed at him, and the hand laid on the muzzle, and had heard the explosion. But in minutes like this things that men see vacillate, and they do not dwell on anything, for they feel themselves obscurely impelled toward deeper shadows still, and all is mist. The insurgents, surprised but not terrified, had rallied, and Enjolras cried, "Wait, do not throw away your shots!" and, in truth, in the first moment of confusion they might wound each other. The majority had gone up to the first-floor and attic windows, whence they commanded the assailants, but the more determined, with Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, and Combetterre, were haughtily standing against the houses at the end, unprotected, and facing the lines of soldiers and guards who crowned the barricade. All this was done without precipitation, and with that strange and menacing gravity which precedes a combat; on both sides men were aiming at each other within point-blank range, and they were so near that they could converse. When they were at the point where the spark was about to shoot forth, an officer wearing a gorget and heavy epaulettes stretched out his sword and said:

"Throw down your arms!"

"Fire!" Enjolras commanded.

The two detonations took place at the same moment, and everything disappeared in smoke, a sharp and stifling smoke, in which the dying and the wounded writhed, with faint and hollow groans. When the smoke dispersed, the two lines of combatants could be seen, thinned out, but still in the same spot, and silently reloading their guns. All at once a thundering voice was heard shouting:

"Begone, or I will blow up the barricade!"

All turned to the quarter whence the voice came.

Marius had entered the wine-shop, fetched the barrel of gunpowder, and then, taking advantage of the smoke and obscure mist which filled the entrenched space, glided along the barricade up to the cage of paving-stones in which the torch was fixed. To tear out the torch, place in its stead the barrel of powder, throw down the pile of paving-stones on the barrel, which was at once unheaded with a sort of terrible obedience, had only occupied so much time as stooping and rising again; and now all, National Guards and Municipal Guards, officers and privates, collected at the other end of the barricade, gazed at him in stupor, as he stood with one foot on the paving-stones, the torch in his hand, his haughty face illumined by a fatal resolution, approaching the flame of the torch to the formidable heap, in which the broken powder-barrel could be distinguished, and uttering the terrifying cry:

"Begone, or I will blow up the barricade!"

Marius, on this barricade after the octogenarian, was the vision of the young revolution after the apparition of the old one.

"Blow up the barricade!" a sergeant said, "and yourself too!"

Marius answered, "And myself too!"

And he lowered the torch toward the barrel of gunpowder; but there was no one left on the barricade; the assailants, leaving their dead and their wounded, fell back pell-mell and in disorder to the end of the street, and disappeared again in the night. It was a *saute qui peut*, and the barricade was saved. All surrounded Marius, and Courfeyrac fell on his neck.

"Here you are!"

"What happiness!" said Combeferre.

"You arrived just in time," said Bossuet.



"Were it not for you I should be dead!" Courfeyrac remarked.

"Without you I should have been goosed," Gavroche added.

Marius added :

"Who is the leader?"

"Yourself," Enjolras replied.

Marius the whole day through had had a furnace in his brain, but now it was a tornado, and this tornado which was in him produced on him the effect of being outside him and carrying him away. It seemed to him as if he were already an immense distance from life, and his two luminous months of joy and love suddenly terminated at this frightful precipice. Cosette lost to him, this barricade, M. Maboëuf letting himself be killed for the Republic, himself chief of the insurgents—all these things seemed to him a monstrous nightmare, and he was obliged to make a mental effort in order to remind himself that all which surrounded him was real. Marius had not lived long enough yet to know that nothing is so imminent as the impossible, and that what must be always foreseen is the unforeseen. He witnessed the performance of his own drama, as if it were a piece of which he understood nothing. In his mental fog he did not recognise Javert, who, fastened to his post, had not made a movement of his head during the attack on the barricade, and saw the revolt buzzing round him with the resignation of a martyr and the majesty of a judge. In the meanwhile, the assailants no longer stirred; they could be heard marching and moving at the end of the street, but did not venture into it, either because they were waiting for orders, or else required reinforcements, before rushing again upon this impregnable redoubt. The insurgents had posted sentries, and some who were medical students had begun dressing wounds. All the tables had been dragged out of the wine-shop, with the exception of the two reserved for the lint and the cartridges, and the one on which Father Maboëuf lay; they had been added to the barricade, and the mattresses off the beds of Widow Hucheloup and the girls had been put in their place. On these mattresses the wounded were laid; as for the three poor creatures who inhabited Corinth, no one knew what had become of them, but they were at length found hidden in the cellar,—“Like lawyers,” Bossuet said; and added, “Women, fie!”

A poignant emotion darkened the joy of the liberated

barricade ; the roll-call was made, and one of the insurgents was missing. Who was he ? one of the dearest and most valiant, Jean Prouvaire. He was sought for among the dead, but was not there ; he was sought for among the wounded, and was not there ; he was evidently a prisoner. Combeferre said to Enjolras :

"They have our friend, but we have their agent ; do you insist on the death of this spy ?"

"Yes," Enjolras replied, "but less than the life of Jean Prouvaire."

This was said in the bar-room close to Javert's post.

"Well," Combeferre continued, "I will fasten a handkerchief to my cane, and go as a flag of truce to offer to give them their man for our man."

"Listen," said Enjolras, as he laid his hand on Combeferre's arm.

There was a meaning click of guns at the end of the street, and a manly voice could be heard crying :

"Long live France ! long live the future !"

They recognised Prouvaire's voice ; a flash passed, and a detonation burst forth ; then the silence returned.

"They have killed him," Combeferre exclaimed.

Enjolras looked at Javert and said to him :

"Your friends have just shot you."

It is a peculiarity of this sort of war, that the attack on barricades is almost always made in the front, and that the assailants generally refrain from turning positions, either because they suspect ambushes, or are afraid to enter winding streets. The whole attention of the insurgents was, consequently, directed to the great barricade, which was evidently the constantly threatened point, and where the contest must infallibly recommence. Marius, however, thought of the little barricade, and went to it ; it was deserted, and only guarded by the lamp which flickered among the paving-stones. However, the Mondétour lane and the branches of the little Truanderie were perfectly calm. As Marius, after making his inspection, was going back, he heard his name faintly uttered in the darkness :

"Monsieur Marius !"

He started, for he recognised the voice which had summoned him two hours back through the garden railings in the Rue Plumet, but this voice now only seemed to be a gasp ; he looked around him and saw nobody. Marius fancied that he was mistaken, and that it was an illusion



added by his mind to the extraordinary realities which were pressing round him. He took a step to leave the remote angle in which the barricade stood.

"Monsieur Marius!" the voice repeated; this time he could not doubt, for he had heard distinctly; he looked around but saw nothing.

"At your feet," the voice said.

He stooped down, and saw in the shadow a form crawling toward him on the pavement. It was the speaker. The lamp enabled him to distinguish a blouse, torn cotton-velvet trousers, bare feet, and something that resembled a pool of blood; Marius also caught a glimpse of a pale face raised to him, and saying:

"Do you not recognise me?"

"No."

"Eponine."

Marius eagerly stooped down; it was really that hapless girl, dressed in male clothes.

"What brought you here? what are you doing?"

"Dying," she said to him.

There are words and incidents that wake up crushed beings; Marius cried with a start:

"You are wounded! wait, I will carry you into the wine-shop! your wound will be dressed! is it serious? how shall I catch hold of you so as not to hurt you? where is it you suffer? Help, good God! but what did you come here for?"

And he tried to pass his hand under her to lift her, and as he did so he touched her hand—she uttered a faint cry.

"Have I hurt you?" Marius asked.

"A little."

"But I only touched your hand."

She raised her hand to Marius' eyes, and he could see a hole right through it.

"What is the matter with your hand?" he said.

"It is pierced."

"Pierced?"

"Yes."

"What with?"

"A bullet."

"How?"

"Did you see a musket aimed at you?"

"Yes, and a hand laid on the muzzle."

"It was mine."

Marius shuddered.

"What madness ! Poor child ! But all the better, if that is your wound ; it is nothing, so let me carry you to a bed. Your wound will be dressed, people do not die of a bullet through the hand."

She murmured :

"The bullet passed through my hand but came out of my back, so it is useless to move me from here. I will tell you how you can do me more good than a surgeon ; sit down by my side on that stone."

He obeyed ; she laid her head on his knees, and without looking at him, said :

"Oh, how good that is, how comforting ! There ! I do not suffer now."

She remained silent for a moment, then turned her head with an effort, and gazed at Marius.

"Do you know what, M. Marius ? it annoyed me that you entered that garden, though it was very foolish of me, as I showed you the house, and then, too, I ought to have remembered that a young gentleman like you—"

She broke off, and leaping over the gloomy transitions which her mind doubtless contained, she added with a heartrending smile :

"You thought me ugly, did you not ?"

Then she continued :

"You are lost, and no one will leave the barricade now. I brought you here, you know, and you are going to die, I feel sure of it. And yet, when I saw the soldier aiming at you, I laid my hand on the muzzle of his gun. How droll it is, but the reason was that I wished to die with you. When I received that bullet I dragged myself here, and as no one saw me I was not picked up. I waited for you, and said, 'Will he not come?' Oh, if you only knew how I bit my blouse, for I was suffering so terribly ; but now I feel all right. Do you remember the day when I came into your room and looked at myself in your glass, and the day when I met you on the boulevard near the washer women ? How the birds sang, and it is not so very long ago. You gave me five francs, and I said to you, 'I do not want your money.' I hope you picked up your coin, for you are not rich, and I did not think of telling you to pick it up. The sun was shining, and it was not at all cold. Do you remember, M. Marius ! Oh, I am so happy, for everybody is going to die."



She had a wild, grave, and heartrending look, and her ragged blouse displayed her naked throat. While speaking, she laid her wounded hand on her chest, in which there was another hole, and whence every moment a stream of blood spirted like a jet of wine from an open bung. Marius gazed at this unfortunate creature with profound compassion.

"Oh!" she suddenly continued, "it is coming back: I choke!"

She raised her blouse and bit it, and her limbs stiffened on the pavement. At this moment Gavroche's crowing voice could be heard from the barricade: the lad had got on to a table to load his musket, and was gaily singing the song so popular at that day:

En voyant Lafayette,  
Le gendarme répète :  
Sauvons-nous ! sauvons-nous ! sauvons-nous !

Eponine raised herself and listened, then she muttered :

"It is he."

And, turning to Marius, added :

"My brother is here, but he must not see me, or he would scold me."

"Your brother?" Marius asked, as he thought most bitterly and sadly of the duties toward the Thénardiens which his father had left him; "which is your brother?"

"That little fellow."

"The one who is singing?"

"Yes."

Marius made a move.

"Oh, do not go away," she said, "it will not be long now."

She was almost sitting up, but her voice was very low, and every now and then interrupted by the death-rattle. She put her face as close as she could to that of Marius, and added with a strange expression :

"Come, I will not play you a trick. I have had a letter addressed to you in my pocket since yesterday. I was told to put it in the post; but kept it, as I did not wish it to reach you. But perhaps you will not be angry with me when we meet again ere long; for we shall meet again, shall we not? Take your letter."

She convulsively seized Marius' hand with her wounded

hand, but seemed no longer to feel the suffering. She placed Marius' hand in her blouse pocket, and he really felt a paper.

"Take it," she said.

Marius took the letter, and she gave a nod of satisfaction and consolation.

"Now, for my trouble ; promise me——"

And she stopped.

"What ?" Marius asked.

"Promise me !"

"I do promise !"

"Promise to kiss me on the forehead when I am dead—I shall feel it."

She let her head fall again on Marius' knees and her eyes closed—he fancied the poor soul had departed. Eponine remained motionless, but all at once, at the moment when Marius believed her eternally asleep, she slowly opened her eyes, on which the gloomy profundity of death was visible, and said to him with an accent whose gentleness seemed already to come from another world :

"And then, Monsieur Marius, I think that I was a little bit in love with you."

She tried to smile once more, and expired.

## CHAPTER XCIX.

MARIUS kept his promise. He kissed that livid forehead, upon which an icy perspiration beaded. It was not an infidelity to Cosette, but a pensive and sweet farewell to an unhappy soul. He had not taken without a quiver the letter which Eponine gave him ; for he at once suspected an event in it, and was impatient to read it. The heart of man is so constituted,—and the unfortunate child had scarce closed her eyes ere Marius thought of unfolding the paper. He gently laid her on the ground and went off, for something told him that he could not read this letter in the presence of a corpse. He walked up to a candle on the ground-floor room ; it was a little note, folded and sealed with the elegant care peculiar to women. The address was in a feminine handwriting, and ran :

"To Monsieur, Monsieur Marius Pontmercy, at M. Courfeyrac's, No. 16 Rue de la Verrerie."



He broke the seal and read :

"My well-beloved,—Alas, my father insists on our going away at once. We shall be this evening at No. 7 Rue de l'Homme Armé, and within a week in London.—  
COSETTE. June 4."

Such was the innocence of their love, that Marius did not even know Cosette's handwriting.

What had happened may be told in a few words. Eponine had done it all. After the night of June 3 she had had a double thought,—to foil the plans of her father and the bandits upon the house in the Rue Plumet, and separate Marius and Cosette. She had changed rags with the first scamp she met, who thought it amusing to dress up as a woman, while Eponine disguised herself as a man. It was she who gave Jean Valjean the expressive warning, and he had gone straight home and said to Cosette, "We shall start this evening, and go to the Rue de l'Homme Armé with Toussaint. Next week we shall be in London." Cosette, startled by this unexpected blow, had hastily written two lines to Marius, but how was she to put the letter in the post? She never went out alone, and Toussaint, surprised by such an errand, would certainly show the letter to M. Fauchelevent. In this state of anxiety, Cosette noticed through the railings Eponine in male clothes, who now incessantly prowled round the garden. Cosette had summoned "this young workman," and gave him the letter and a five-franc piece, saying, "Carry this letter at once to its address," and Eponine put the letter in her pocket. The next day she went to Courfeyrac's and asked for Marius, not to hand him the letter, but "to see," a thing which every jealous, loving soul will understand. There she waited for Marius, or at any rate Courfeyrac—always to see. When Courfeyrac said to her, "We are going to the barricades," an idea crossed her mind—to throw herself into this death as she would have done into any other, and thrust Marius into it. She followed Courfeyrac, assured herself of the spot where the barricade was being built; and, feeling certain, since Marius had not received the letter, that he would go at nightfall to the usual meeting-place, she went to the Rue Plumet, waited for Marius there, and gave him that summons in the name of his friends, which, as she thought, must lead him to the barricade. She reckoned on Marius' despair when he did not find

Cosette, and she was not mistaken, and then she returned to the Rue de la Chanvrerie. We have just seen what she did there; she died with that tragic joy of jealous hearts, which drags the beloved being down to death with them, saying, "No one shall have him!"

Marius covered Cosette's letter with kisses. She loved him then! and for a moment he had an idea that he ought not to die; but then he said to himself, "Her father is taking her to England, and my grandfather will not give his consent to the marriage; no change has taken place in fatality." Dreamers like Marius undergo such supreme despondencies, and desperate resolves issue from them; the fatigue of living is insupportable, and death is sooner over. Then he thought that two duties were left him to accomplish; to inform Cosette of his death and send her his last farewell, and to save from the imminent catastrophe which was approaching that poor boy, Eponine's brother and Thénardier's son. He had a pocket-book about him, the same which had contained the paper on which he had written so many love-thoughts for Cosette; he tore out a leaf, and wrote in pencil these few lines:

"Our marriage was impossible; I asked my grandfather's consent, and he refused to give it; I have no fortune, nor have you. I ran to your house, and did not find you there; you remember the pledge I made to you; I keep it. I die. I love you, and when you read this, my soul will be near you, and will smile upon you."

Having nothing with which to seal this letter, he merely folded it, and wrote on it the address.

"To Mademoiselle Cosette Fauchelevent, at M. Fauchelevent's, No. 7 Rue de l'Homme Armé."

The letter folded, he stood for a moment in thought, then opened his pocket-book again, and wrote with the same pencil these lines on the first page:

"My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my body to my grandfather, M. Gillenormand, No. 6 Rue des Filles du Calvaire, in the Marais."

He returned the book to his coat pocket, and then summoned Gavroche. The lad, on hearing Marius' voice, ran up with his joyous and devoted face.

"Will you do something for me?"

"Everything," said Gavroche. "God of Gods! my goose would have been cooked without you."



"You see this letter?"

"Yes."

"Take it. Leave the barricade at once" (Gavroche began scratching his ear anxiously), "and to-morrow morning you will deliver it at its address, No. 7 Rue de l'Homme Armé."

The heroic lad replied:

"Well, but during that time the barricade will be attacked, and I shall not be here."

"The barricade will not be attacked again till daybreak, according to all appearances, and will not be taken till to-morrow afternoon."

The new respite which the assailants granted to the barricade was really prolonged; it was one of those intermittences frequent in night fights, which are always followed by redoubled obstinacy.

"Well," said Gavroche, "suppose I were to deliver your letter to-morrow morning?"

"It will be too late; for the barricade will probably be blockaded, all the issues guarded, and you will be unable to get out. Be off at once."

Gavroche could not find any reply, so he stood there undecided, and scratching his head sorrowfully. All at once he seized the letter with one of those birdlike movements of his.

"All right," he said.

And he ran off toward the Mondétour lane. Gavroche had an idea which decided him, but which he did not mention; it was the following:

"It is scarce midnight, the Rue de l'Homme Armé is no great distance off. I will deliver the letter at once, and be back in time."

What are the convulsions of a city compared with the convulsions of a soul? man is even a greater profundity than the people. Jean Valjean at this very moment was suffering from a frightful internal earthquake, and all the gulfs were reopened within him. He too was quivering like Paris, on the threshold of a formidable and obscure revolution. A few hours had sufficed to cover his destiny and his conscience with shadows, and of him, as of Paris, it might be said, "The two principles are face to face." The white angel and the black angel are about to wrestle with each other on the brink of the abyss; which will hurl the other down?

On the evening of that same day, Jean Valjean, accompanied by Cosette and Toussaint, proceeded to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, where a tremendous incident was fated to take place. Cosette had not left the Rue Plumet without an attempt at resistance, and for the first time since they had lived together, the will of Cosette and the will of Jean Valjean had shown themselves distinct, and had contradicted each other, though they did not come into collision. There was objection on one side and inflexibility on the other: for the abrupt advice to move, thrown to Jean Valjean by a stranger, had alarmed him to such a point as to render him absolute. He fancied himself tracked and pursued, and Cosette was compelled to yield. The pair reached the Rue de l'Homme Armé without exchanging a syllable, for each was deep in personal thought; Jean Valjean so anxious that he did not notice Cosette's sadness, and Cosette so sad that she did not notice Jean Valjean's anxiety. Jean Valjean had brought Toussaint with him, which he had never done in his previous absences, but he foresaw that he might possibly never return to the Rue Plumet, and he could neither leave Toussaint behind him nor tell her his secret. Moreover, he felt her to be devoted and sure; the treachery of a servant to a master begins with curiosity, and Toussaint, as if predestined to be Jean Valjean's servant, was not curious. In his departure from the Rue Plumet, which was almost a flight, Jean Valjean took away with him nothing but the fragrant little port-manteau, christened by Cosette the *inseparable*. Packed trunks would have required porters, and porters are witnesses; a hackney-coach had been called to the gate in the Rue de Babylone and they went away in it. It was with great difficulty that Toussaint obtained permission to pack up a little stock of linen and clothes, and a few toilet articles; Cosette, herself, only took her desk and blotting-book. Jean Valjean, in order to heighten the solitude and mystery of this disappearance, had so arranged as to leave the Rue Plumet at nightfall, which had given Cosette the time to write her note to Marius. They reached the Rue de l'Homme Armé when it was quite dark, and went to bed in perfect silence.

The apartments in this street were situated on a second floor in a back yard, and consisted of two bedrooms, a dining-room, and a kitchen adjoining, with a closet in which was a flock-bed, which fell to the lot of Toussaint.



The dining-room was at the same time the anteroom, and separated the two bedrooms; the apartments were provided with the necessary articles of furniture. Human nature is so constituted that men become reassured almost as absurdly as they are alarmed; hence Jean Valjean had scarce reached the Rue de l'Homme Armé ere his anxiety cleared away and was gradually dissipated. There are calming places which act to some extent mechanically on the mind, and when a street is obscure the inhabitants are peaceful. Jean Valjean felt a contagious tranquillity in this lane of old Paris, which is so narrow that it is barred against vehicles by a cross-beam, which is dumb and deaf amid the noisy town, full of twilight in broad daylight, and, so to speak, incapable of feeling emotions between its two rows of aged houses, which are silent, as old people generally are. There is in this street a stagnant oblivion, and Jean Valjean breathed again in it, for how was it possible that he could be found there? His first care was to place the *inseparable* by his side; he slept soundly, and night counsels, we might add, night appeases. The next morning he woke up almost gay. He considered the dining-room charming, though it was hideous, for it was furnished with an old round table, a low sideboard surmounted by a mirror, a rickety easy-chair, and a few chairs encumbered with Toussaint's parcels. In one of these parcels Jean Valjean's National Guard uniform could be seen through an opening.

As for Cosette, she ordered Toussaint to bring a basin of broth to her bedroom, and did not make her appearance till evening. At about five o'clock, Toussaint, who went about very busy with this small moving, placed a cold fowl on the dinner-table, which Cosette consented to look at, through deference for her father. This done, Cosette, protesting a persistent headache, said good-night to Jean Valjean, and shut herself up in her bedroom. Jean Valjean ate a wing of the fowl with appetite, and with his elbows on the table, and, gradually growing reassured, regained possession of his serenity. While he was eating his modest dinner, he vaguely heard twice or thrice stammering Toussaint say to him, "There is a disturbance, sir, and people are fighting in Paris." But, absorbed in a multitude of internal combinations, he had paid no attention to her; truth to tell, he had not heard her. He rose and began walking from the door to the window, and from the window to the door with calmness. Cosette, his sole preoccupation, reverted to his



mind, not that he was alarmed by this headache, a slight nervous attack, a girl's pouting, a momentary cloud, which would disappear in a day or two, but he thought of the future, and, as usual, thought of it gently. After all, he saw no obstacle to his happy life resuming its course: at certain hours everything seems possible, at others everything appears easy, and Jean Valjean was in one of those good hours. They usually arrive after bad hours, as day does after night, through that law of succession and contrast which is the basis of our nature, and which superficial minds call antithesis. In this peaceful street where he had sought shelter, Jean Valjean freed himself from all that had troubled him for some time past, and, from the very fact that he had seen so much darkness, he was beginning to perceive a little azure. To have left the Rue Plumet without any complication or accident was a good step gained, and perhaps it would be wise to leave the country, were it only for a few months, and go to London. Well, they would go; what did he care whether he were in England or France, provided that he had Cosette by his side? He arranged in his mind, and with all possible facility, the departure for England with Cosette, and he saw his felicity reconstructed, no matter where, in the perspectives of his reverie.

While slowly walking up and down, his eye suddenly fell on something strange. He noticed, facing him in the inclined mirror over the sideboard, and read distinctly:

"My well-beloved,—Alas, my father insists on our going away at once. We shall be this evening at No. 7 Rue de l'Homme Armé, and within a week in London.—COSETTE. June 4."

Jean Valjean stopped with haggard gaze. Cosette, on arriving, had laid her blotting-book on the sideboard facing the mirror, and, immersed in her painful thoughts, had forgotten it there, without even noticing that she had left it open at the very page on which she had dried the few lines she had written and entrusted to the young workman passing along the Rue Plumet. The writing was imprinted on the blotting-paper and the mirror reflected the writing. The result was what is called in geometry a symmetrical image, so that the writing reversed on the blotting-paper was placed straight in the mirror, and offered its natural direction, and Jean Valjean had before his eyes the letter written on the previous evening by Cosette to Marius. It



was simple and crushing. Jean Valjean walked up to the mirror and read the lines again, but did not believe in them. They produced on him the effect of an apparition in a flash of lightning : it was an hallucination—it was impossible—it was not. Gradually his perception became more precise, he looked at Cosette's blotting-book, and the consciousness of the real fact returned to him. He took up the blotting-book and said, "It comes from that." He feverishly examined the lines imprinted on the blotting-paper, but as they ran backward he could see no meaning in the strange scrawl. Then he said to himself, "Why, it means nothing ; there is nothing written there." And he drew a long breath with inexpressible relief. Who has not felt such wild delight in horrible moments ? the soul does not surrender to despair till it has exhausted every illusion.

He held the book in his hand and gazed at it, stupidly happy, almost ready to laugh at the hallucination of which he had been the dupe. All at once his eyes fell again on the mirror, and he saw the vision again ; the lines stood on it with inexorable clearness. This time it was no mirage, it was palpable, it was the writing turned straight in the mirror, and he comprehended the fact. Jean Valjean tottered, let the blotting-book slip from his grasp, and fell into the old easy-chair by the side of the sideboard with hanging head and glassy, wandering eye. He said to himself that it was evident that the light of this world was eclipsed, and that Cosette had written that to somebody. Then he heard his soul, which had become terrible again, utter a hoarse roar in the darkness. Just attempt to take from the lion the dog he has in his cage ! Strange, and sad to say, at that moment Marius had not yet received Cosette's letter ; accident had treacherously carried it to Jean Valjean before delivering it to Marius. Jean Valjean up to that day had never been conquered by a trial. He had been subjected to frightful assaults. Not a blow of evil fortune had been spared to him, and the ferocity of fate, armed with all social revenge and contempt, had taken him for its victim and ferociously attacked him. He had accepted, when it was necessary, every extremity ; he had surrendered his reacquired inviolability as man, given up his liberty, risked his head, lost everything and suffered everything, and he had remained disinterested and stoical, to such an extent that at times he seemed to be oblivious of self, like a martyr. His conscience, hardened to all possible



assaults of adversity, might seem quite impregnable, but any one who had now gazed into his heart would have been compelled to allow that it was growing weak. In truth, of all the tortures he had undergone in this long trial to which fate had subjected him, this was the most formidable, and never had such a vice held him before. Alas ! the supreme trial, we may say the sole trial, is the loss of the being whom we love.

Poor old Jean Valjean did not, assuredly, love Cosette otherwise than as a father ; but, as we have already remarked, the very bereavement of his life had introduced all the forms of love into this paternity. He loved Cosette as his daughter, loved her as his mother, and loved her as his sister, and, as he had never had a mistress or a wife, that feeling too, the most clinging of all, was mingled with the others, vague, ignorant, pure with the purity of blindness, unconscious, heavenly, angelic, and divine, less as a feeling than as an instinct, less as an instinct than as an attraction, imperceptible, invisible, but real ; and love, properly so called, was in his enormous tenderness for Cosette as the vein of gold is in the mountain, dark and virginal. Our readers must study for a moment this state of the heart ; no marriage was possible between them, not even that of souls, and yet it is certain that their destinies were wedded. Excepting Cosette, that is to say, excepting a childhood, Jean Valjean, during the whole of his life, had known nothing about things that may be loved. Those passions and loves which succeed each other had not produced in him those successive stages of green, light green, or dark green, which may be noticed on leaves that survive the winter, and in men who pass their fiftieth year. In fine, as we have more than once urged, all this internal fusion, all this whole, whose resultant was a lofty virtue, ended by making Jean Valjean a father to Cosette. A strange father, forged out of the grandsire, the son, the brother, and the husband, which were in Jean Valjean ; a father in whom there was even a mother ; a father who loved Cosette and adored her, and who had this child for his light, his abode, his family, his country, and his paradise. Hence, when he saw that it was decidedly ended, that she was escaping from him, slipping through his fingers, concealing herself, that she was a cloud, that she was water, when he had before his eyes this crushing evidence ; another is the object of her heart, another is the wish of her life, she has a lover, I am



only the father, I no longer exist,—when he could no longer doubt, when he said to himself, “She is leaving me,” the sorrow he experienced went beyond the limits of the possible. Then, as we have just stated, he had a quivering of revolt from head to foot; he felt even in the roots of his hair the immense reawaking of selfishness, and the “I” yelled in the depths of this man’s soul.

There are such things as internal earthquakes; the penetration of a desperate certainty into a man is not effected without removing and breaking certain profound elements which are at times the man himself. Grief, when it attains that pitch, is a frantic flight of all the forces of the conscience, and such crises are fatal. Few among us emerge from them without change, and firm in our duty, for when the limit of suffering is exceeded the most imperturbable virtue is disconcerted. Jean Valjean took up the blotting-book and convinced himself afresh; he bent down as if petrified, and with fixed eye, over the undeniable lines, and such a cloud collected within him that it might be believed that the whole interior of his soul was in a state of collapse. He examined this revelation through the exaggerations of reverie with an apparent and startling calmness, for it is a formidable thing when a man’s calmness attains the coldness of a statue. He measured the frightful step which his destiny had taken without any suspicion on his part. He recalled his fears of the past summer, so madly dissipated. He recognised the precipice: it was still the same, but Jean Valjean was no longer at the top but at the bottom. It was an extraordinary and crushing fact that he had fallen without perceiving it; the whole light of his life had fled while he still fancied he could see the sun. His instinct did not hesitate; he brought together certain circumstances, certain dates, certain blushes, and certain palenesses of Cosette, and said to himself, “It is he!” The divination of despair is a species of mysterious bow which never misses its mark, and with its first shaft it hit Marius. He did not know the name, but at once found the man; he perceived distinctly at the bottom of the implacable evocation of memory the unknown prowler of the Luxembourg, that villainous seeker of amourettes, that romantic idler, that imbecile, that coward, for it is cowardice to exchange loving glances with girls who have by their side a father who loves them. After feeling quite certain that this young man was at the bottom of the situation, and that all this came from him, Jean

Valjean, the regenerated man, the man who had toiled so heavily in his soul, the man who had made so many efforts to resolve his whole life, his whole misery, and his whole misfortune into love, looked into himself, and saw there a spectre—hatred.

While Jean Valjean was thinking, Toussaint came in : he rose and asked her :

“Do you know where about it is?”

Toussaint, in her stupefaction, could only answer :

“I beg your pardon, sir.”

Jean Valjean continued :

“Did you not say just now that they were fighting?”

“Oh yes, sir,” Toussaint replied ; “over at St. Merry.”

There are some mechanical movements which come to us, without our cognisance, from our deepest thoughts. It was doubtless under the impulse of a movement of this nature, of which he was scarce conscious, that Jean Valjean found himself five minutes later in the street. He was bareheaded, and sat down on the bench before his house, seemingly listening.

The night had come.

How much time did he pass thus? what was the ebb and flow of this tragical meditation? did he draw himself up? did he remain bowed down? had he been bent till he was broken? could he recover himself and stand again upon something solid in his conscience? Probably he could not have said himself. The street was deserted; and a few anxious citizens who hurriedly returned home scarce noticed him, for each for himself is the rule in times of peril. The lamplighter came as usual to light the lamp, which was exactly opposite the door of No. 7, and went away. Jean Valjean would not have appeared to be a living man to any one who might have examined him in this gloom, for he sat on his bench motionless, like a statue of ice. His despair was got beyond congelation. The tocsin and vague stormy rumours could be heard, and in the midst of all these convulsions of the bell blended with the riot, the clock of St. Paul struck the eleventh hour, solemnly and without hurrying, for the tocsin is man, the hour is God. The passing of the hour produced no effect on Jean Valjean, and he did not stir. Almost immediately after, however, a sudden detonation broke out in the direction of the markets, followed by a second even more violent,—it was probably that attack on the barricade



of the Rue de la Chanvrerie which we have just seen repulsed by Marius. At this double discharge, whose fury seemed increased by the stupor of the night, Jean Valjean started; he turned in the direction whence the sound came, but then fell back on his bench, crossed his arms, and his head slowly bent down again on his chest. He resumed his dark dialogue with himself.

All at once he raised his eyes, for there was some one in the street; he heard footsteps close to him, and by the light of the lamp he perceived a vivid, young, and radiant face, in the direction of the street which runs past the Archives. It was Gavroche, who had just arrived from the Rue de la Chanvrerie. Gavroche was looking up in the air, and appeared to be seeking. He saw Jean Valjean distinctly, but paid no attention to him. Gavroche, after looking up in the air, looked down on the ground; he stood on tiptoe, and felt the doors and ground-floor windows—they were all shut, bolted, and barred. After examining the fronts of several houses barricaded in this way the gamin shrugged his shoulders, and then resumed his self-colloquy with himself, thus, "By Jove!" Then he looked up in the air again. Jean Valjean, who, in a moment previously, in the state of mind in which he was, would neither have spoken to nor answered any one, felt an irresistible impulse to address this lad.

"My little boy," he said, "what is the matter with you?"

"Why, I'm hungry," Gavroche answered bluntly. And he added, "Little yourself."

Jean Valjean felt in his pocket and pulled out a five-franc piece. But Gavroche, who was a species of wag-tail, and rapidly passed from one gesture to another, had just picked up a stone. He had noticed the lamp.

"Hilloh!" he said, "you have still got lights here. You are not acting rightly, my friends, that is disorderly conduct. Break it for me."

And he threw the stone at the lamp, whose glass fell with such a noise that the citizens concealed behind their curtains in the opposite house cried, "There is '93!" The lamp oscillated violently and went out; the street suddenly became dark.

"That's it, old street," said Gavroche, "put on your nightcap." Then, turning to Jean Valjean, he said:

"What do you call that gigantic monument which you have there at the end of the street? it's the Archives, isn't

it? let's pull down some of those great brutes of columns and make a tidy barricade."

Jean Valjean walked up to Gavroche.

"Poor creature," he said in a low voice, and as if speaking to himself, "he is hungry."

And he placed the five-franc piece in his hand. Gavroche raised his nose, amazed at the size of this double sou; he looked at it in the darkness, and the whiteness of the double sou dazzled him. He was acquainted with five-franc pieces by hearsay, and their reputation was agreeable to him; he was delighted to see one so closely, and said, "Let us contemplate the tiger." He looked at it for some moments in ecstasy; then, turning to Jean Valjean, he held out the coin to him, and said majestically:

"Citizen, I prefer breaking the lamps. Take back your ferocious animal, for I am not to be corrupted. It has five claws, but it can't scratch me."

"Have you a mother?" Jean Valjean asked.

Gavroche replied:

"Perhaps more than you."

"Well," Jean Valjean continued, "keep that money for your mother."

Gavroche was affected. Moreover, he had noticed that the man who was addressing him had no hat on, and this inspired him with confidence.

"Really, then," he said, "it is not to prevent me breaking the lamps?"

"Break as many as you like."

"You are a worthy man," said Gavroche.

And he put the five-franc piece in one of his pockets. Then, with increasing confidence, he added:

"Do you belong to this street?"

"Yes, why?"

"Can you point me out No. 7?"

"What do you want at No. 7?"

Here the lad stopped, for he feared lest he had said too much. He energetically plunged his nails into his hair, and confined himself to answering:

"Ah, there it is."

An idea flashed across Jean Valjean's mind, for agony has lucidities of that nature. He said to the boy:

"Have you brought me the letter which I am expecting?"

"You?" said Gavroche, "you ain't a woman."

"The letter is for Mademoiselle Cosette, is it not?"



"Cosette?" Gavroche grumbled; "yes, I think it is that absurd name."

"Well," Jean Valjean continued, "I am to deliver the letter to her, so give it to me."

"In that case, you must be aware that I am sent from the barricade?"

"Of course," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche thrust his hand into another of his pockets, and produced a square folded letter; then he gave the military salute.

"Respect for the despatch," he said; "it comes from the Provisional Government."

"Give it to me," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche held the paper above his head.

"You must not imagine that it is a love-letter, though it is for a woman; it is for the people; we are fighting, and we respect the sex; we are not like people in the world of fashion, where there are lions that send poulets to camels."

"Give it to me."

"After all," Gavroche continued, "you look like an honest man."

"Make haste."

"Here it is."

And he handed the paper to Jean Valjean.

"And make haste, Monsieur Chose, since Mamselle Chosette is waiting."

Gavroche felt pleased at having made this pun. Jean Valjean added:

"Must the answer be taken to St. Merry?"

"You would make in that way," Gavroche exclaimed, "one of those cakes vulgarly called blunders. That letter comes from the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and I am going back to it. Good-night, citizen."

This said, Gavroche went away, or, to speak more correctly, resumed his birdlike flight to the spot whence he had escaped. He plunged again into the darkness, as if there were a hole there, with the rigid rapidity of a projectile: the lane of l'Homme Armé became once again silent and solitary. In a twinkling, this strange lad, who had shadow and dream within him, buried himself in the gloom of these rows of black houses, and was lost in it like smoke in darkness, and it might have been fancied that he was dispersed and had vanished, had not, a few minutes after his disappearance, a noisy breakage of glass, and the

splendid echo of a lamp falling on the pavement, suddenly reawakened the indignant citizens. It was Gavroche passing along the Rue de Chaume.

Jean Valjean re-entered with Marius's letter: he groped his way upstairs, pleased with the darkness like an owl that holds its prey, gently opened and closed the door, listened whether he could hear any sound, convinced himself that Cosette and Toussaint were, according to all appearances, asleep, and plunged into the Fumade lighting bottle three or four matches before he could procure a spark, for his hand trembled so, as though what he had just done was a robbery. At last his candle was lit, he sat down at the table, opened the letter, and read. In such violent emotions men do not read, they hurl down, so to speak, the paper they hold, clutch it like a victim, crumple it, bury in it the nails of their fury or delight, they run to the end, they dash at the beginning: the attention is feverish, it understands the essential facts, it seizes on one point, and all the rest disappears. In the note from Marius to Cosette Jean Valjean only saw these words:

"—I die: when you read this my soul will be near you."

In the presence of this line he felt a horrible bewilderment; he remained for a moment as if crushed by the change of emotion which took place in him. He gazed at Marius' letter with a species of drunken amazement; he had before his eyes this splendour, the death of the hated being. He uttered a frightful cry of internal joy. So all was over, and the dénouement arrived more quickly than he could have dared to hope. The being that encumbered his destiny was disappearing; he went away of his own accord, freely and willingly, without his doing anything in the matter, without any fault on the part of him, Jean Valjean; "that man" was going to die, perhaps was already dead. Here his fever made its calculations,—"No, he is not yet dead. The letter was evidently written to be read by Cosette on the next morning": since the two volleys he had heard between eleven o'clock and midnight nothing had occurred: the barricade would not be seriously attacked till daybreak, but no matter, from the moment when 'that man' is mixed up in this war, he was lost; he is caught in the cog-wheels. Jean Valjean felt himself delivered; he was going to find himself once more alone with Cosette, the rivalry ceased, and the future began again. He need only keep the note in his pocket, and Cosette would never know what



had become of 'that man'; I have only to let things take their course. That man cannot escape, and if he is not dead yet, it is certain that he is going to die. What happiness!" All this said internally, he became gloomy: he went down and aroused the porter. About an hour later Jean Valjean left the house in the uniform of a National Guard, and armed. The porter had easily obtained for him in the neighbourhood the articles to complete his equipment: he had a loaded musket and a full cartouche-box. He proceeded in the direction of the markets.

### CHAPTER C.

THE insurgents, under the eye of Enjolras, had turned the night to good account: the barricade had not only been repaired, but increased. It had been raised two feet, and iron bars planted in the paving-stones resembled couched lances. All sorts of rubbish, added and brought from all sides, complicated the external confusion, and the redoubt had been cleverly converted into a wall inside and a thicket outside. The staircase of paving-stones, which allowed the top of the barricade to be reached, was restored, the ground floor of the room of the inn was cleared out, the kitchen converted into an infirmary, the wounds were dressed, the powder, scattered about the tables and floor, was collected, bullets were cast, cartridges manufactured, lint plucked, the fallen arms distributed; the dead were carried off and laid in a heap, in the Mondétour lane, of which they were still masters. The pavement remained for a long time red at that spot. Among the dead were four suburban National Guards, and Enjolras ordered their uniforms to be laid on one side. Enjolras had advised two hours' sleep, and his advice was an order; still, only three or four took advantage of it, and Feuilly employed the two hours in engraving this inscription on the wall, facing the wine-shop—

"VIVENT LES PEUPLES."

These three words, carved in the stone with a nail, could still be read on this wall in 1848. The three women took advantage of the respite to disappear entirely, which allowed the insurgents to breathe more at their ease; and they contrived to find refuge in some neighbouring house. Most of

the wounded could and would still fight. There were, on a pile of mattresses and trusses of straw laid in the kitchen converted into an infirmary, five men seriously wounded, of whom two were Municipal Guards ; the wounds of the latter were dressed first. No one remained in the ground-floor room save Maboëuf, under his black cerecloth, and Javert, fastened to the post.

In the interior of this room, which was scarce lighted by a solitary candle, the mortuary table at the end being behind the post like a horizontal bar, a sort of large vague cross resulted from Javert standing and Maboëuf lying down. Although the pole of the omnibus was mutilated by the bullets, sufficient remained for a flag to be attached to it. Enjolras, who possessed that quality of a chief of always doing what he said, fastened to it the bullet-pierced and bloodstained coat of the killed old man. No meal was possible, for there was neither bread nor meat. The fifty men during the sixteen hours they had stood at the barricade speedily exhausted the scanty provisions of the inn. At a given moment every barricade that holds out becomes the raft of the *Méduse*, and the combatants must resign themselves to hunger. They had reached the early hours of that Spartan day, June 6, when at the barricade of St. Merry, Jeanne, surrounded by insurgents who cried for bread, answered, "What for? it is three o'clock; at four we shall be dead." As they could no longer eat, Enjolras prohibited drinking; he put the wine under an interdict, and served out the spirits. Some fifteen full bottles, hermetically sealed, were found in the cellar, which Enjolras and Combeferre examined. Enjolras, in spite of the murmurs, put his veto on the fifteen bottles, and in order that no one might touch them, and that they should be to some extent sacred, he had placed them under the table on which Father Maboëuf lay.

At about two in the morning they counted their strength; there were still thirty-seven. Day was beginning to appear, and the torch, which had been returned to its stone lantern, was extinguished. The interior of the barricade, that species of small yard taken from the street, was bathed in darkness, and resembled, through the vague twilight horror, the deck of a dismasted ship. The combatants moved about like black forms. Above this frightful nest of gloom the storeys of the silent houses stood out lividly, and above them again the chimney-pots were assuming a roseate hue.



The sky had that charming tint which may be white and may be blue, and the birds flew about in it with twitterings of joy. The tall house which formed the background of the barricade looked to the east, and had a pink reflection on its roof. At the third-floor window the morning breeze blew about the gray hair on the head of the dead man.

Enjolras had gone out to reconnoitre, and had left by the Mondétour lane, keeping in the shadow of the houses. The insurgents, we must state, were full of hope: the way in which they had repulsed the night attack almost made them disdain beforehand the attack at daybreak. They waited for it and smiled at it, and no more doubted of their success than of their cause; moreover, help was evidently going to reach them, and they reckoned on it. With that facility of triumphant prophecy which is a part of the strength of the combating Frenchman, they divided into three certain phases the opening day,—at six in the morning a regiment, which had been worked upon, would turn; at midday, insurrection all over Paris; at sunset, the revolution. The tocsin of St. Merry, which had not ceased once since the previous evening, could be heard, and this was a proof that the other barricade, the great one, Jeanne's, still held out. All these hopes were interchanged by the groups with a species of gay and formidable buzzing, which resemble the war-hum of a swarm of bees. Enjolras reappeared returning from his gloomy walk in the external darkness. He listened for a moment to all this joy with his arms folded, and then said, fresh and rosy in the growing light of dawn,—

"The whole army of Paris is out, and one-third of that army is preparing to attack the barricade behind which you now are. There is, too, the National Guard. I distinguished the shakos of the fifth line regiment, and the colours of the sixth legion. You will be attacked in an hour; as for the people, they were in a state of ferment yesterday, but this morning they do not stir. There is nothing to wait for, nothing to hope; no more from a faubourg than from a regiment. You are abandoned."

These words fell on the buzzing groups, and produced the same effect as the first drops of a storm do on a swarm. All remained dumb, and there was a moment of inexpressible silence, in which death might have been heard flying past. This moment was short, and a voice shouted to Enjolras from the thickest of the crowd:

"Be it so. Let us raise the barricade to a height of

twenty feet, and all fall upon it. Citizens, let us offer the protest of corpses, and show that if the people abandon the republicans, the republicans do not abandon the people."

These words disengaged the thoughts of all from the painful cloud of individual anxieties, and an enthusiastic shout greeted them. The name of the man who spoke thus was never known; he was some unknown blouse-wearer, an unknown man, a forgotten man, a passing hero, that great anonymous always mixed up in human crises and in social births, who at the given moment utters the decisive word in a supreme fashion, and who fades away into darkness, after having represented for a minute, in the light of a flash, the people and God. This inexorable resolution was so strongly in the air of June 6, 1832, that almost at the same hour the insurgents of the St. Merry barricade uttered this cry which became historical,—“Whether they come to our help or whether they do not, what matter! Let us all fall here, to the last man.” As we see, the two barricades, though essentially isolated, communicated.

After the unknown man, who decreed the “protest of corpses,” had spoken, and given the formula of the common soul, a strangely satisfied and terrible cry issued from every mouth, funereal in its meaning, and triumphal in its accent.

“Long live death! Let us all stay.”

“Why all?” Enjolras asked.

“All, all!”

Enjolras continued:

“The position is good and the barricade fine. Thirty men are sufficient, then why sacrifice forty?”

They replied:

“Because not one of us will go away.”

“Citizens,” Enjolras cried, and there was in his voice an almost irritated vibration, “the republic is not rich enough in men to make an unnecessary outlay. If it be the duty of some to go away, that duty must be performed like any other.”

Enjolras, the man of principle, had that species of omnipotence, which is evolved from the absolute, over his co-religionists. Still, however great that omnipotence might be, they murmured. A chief to the tips of his fingers, Enjolras, on seeing that they murmured, insisted. He continued haughtily:

“Let those who are afraid to be only thirty say so.”

The murmurs were redoubled.



"Besides," a voice in the throng remarked, "to go away is easily said; but the barricade is surrounded."

"Not on the side of the markets," said Enjolras. "The Rue Mondétour is free, and the Marché des Innocents can be reached by the Rue des Prêcheurs."

"And then," another voice in the group remarked, "we should be caught by falling in with some grand rounds of the line or the National Guard. They will see a man passing in blouse and cap; 'Where do you come from? don't you belong to the barricade?' and they will look at your hands, you smell of powder, and will be shot."

Enjolras, without answering, touched Combeferre's shoulder, and both entered the ground-floor room. They came out again a moment after, Enjolras holding in his outstretched hands the four uniforms which he had laid on one side, and Combeferre followed him carrying the cross-belts and shakos.

"In this uniform," Enjolras said, "it is easy to enter the ranks and escape. Here are four at any rate."

And he threw the four uniforms on the unpaved ground; but as no one moved in the stoical audience Combeferre resolved to make an appeal.

"Come," he said, "you must show a little pity. Do you know what the question is here? it is about women. Look you, are there wives, yes or no? are there children, yes or no? are these nothing, who rock a cradle with their foot, and have a heap of children around them? let him among you who has never seen a nursing-woman's breast hold up his hand. Ah, you wish to be killed. I wish it too, I who am addressing you, but I do not wish to feel the ghosts of women twining their arms around me. Die,—very good, but do not cause people to die. Suicides like those which are about to take place here are sublime, but suicide is restricted and does not allow of extension, and so soon as it affects your relations, suicide is called murder. Think of the little fair heads, and think too of the white hair. Listen to me,—Enjolras tells me that just now he saw at the corner of the Rue du Cygne a candle at a poor window on the fifth floor, and on the panes the shaking shadow of an old woman who appeared to have spent the night in watching at the window; she is perhaps the mother of one of you. Well, let that man go, and hasten to say to his mother,—'Mother, here I am!' Let him be easy in his mind, for the work will



be done here all the same. When a man supports his relatives by his toil, he has no longer any right to sacrifice himself, for that is deserting his family. And then, too, those who have daughters, and those who have sisters! only think of them. You let yourselves be killed, you are dead, very good; and to-morrow? it is terrible when girls have no bread, for a man begs, but a woman sells. Oh, those charming, graceful, and gentle creatures with flowers in their bonnets, who fill the house with chastity, who sing, who prattle, who are like a living perfume, who prove the existence of angels in heaven by the purity of virgins on earth, that Jeanne, that Lise, that Mimi, those adorable and honest creatures, who are your blessing and your pride, —ah, my God! they will starve. What would you have me say to you? There is a human flesh-market, and you will not prevent them entering it with your shadowy hands trembling around them. Think of the street, think of the pavement covered with strollers, think of the shops before which women in low-necked dresses come and go in the mud. Those women, too, were pure.

“Come, those who have families must be good fellows and give us a shake of the hand and go away, leaving us to do the job here all alone. I am well aware that courage is needed to go away, and that it is difficult, but the more difficult the more meritorious it is. You say, ‘I have a gun and am at the barricade; all the worse, I remain.’ All the worse is easily said. My friends, there is a morrow, and that morrow you will not see, but your families will see it. And what sufferings! Stay, do you know what becomes of a healthy child with cheeks like an apple, who chatters, prattles, laughs, and smiles as fresh as a kiss, when he is abandoned? I saw one, quite little, about so high; his father was dead and poor people had taken him in through charity, but they had not bread for themselves. The child was always hungry; it was winter-time, but though he was always hungry he did not cry. He was seen to go close to the stove, whose pipe was covered with yellow earth. The boy detached with his fingers a piece of this earth and ate it,—his breathing was hoarse, his face livid, his legs soft, and his stomach swollen. He said nothing, and when spoken to made no answer. He is dead. He was brought to the Necker Hospital to die, where I saw him; for I was a student there. Now, if there be any fathers among you, fathers whose delight it is to take



a walk on Sunday, holding in their powerful hand a child's small fingers, let each of these fathers fancy this lad his own. That poor brat I can remember perfectly; I fancy I see him now; and, when he lay on the dissecting table, his bones stood out under his skin like the tombs under the grass of a cemetery. We found a sort of mud in his stomach, and he had ashes between his teeth. Come, let us examine our conscience and take the advice of our heart; statistics prove that the mortality among deserted children is fifty-five per cent. I repeat, it is a question of wives, of mothers, of daughters, and babes. Am I saying anything about you? I know very well what you are. I know that you are all brave. I know that you have all in your hearts the joy and glory of laying down your lives for the great cause. I know very well that you feel yourselves chosen to die usefully and magnificently, and that each of you clings to his share of the triumph. Very good. But you are not alone in this world, and there are other beings of whom you must think; you should not be selfish."

All hung their heads with a gloomy air, strange contradictions of the human heart in the sublimest moments! Combeferre, who spoke thus, was not an orphan, he remembered the mothers of others and forgot his own, he was going to let himself be killed, and was "selfish." Marius had but one idea, to die, and he did not wish to avert his attention from it, but he thought in his gloomy somnambulism that in destroying himself he was not prohibited from saving somebody. He raised his voice:

"Enjolras and Combeferre are right," he said, "let us have no useless sacrifice. I join them, and we must make haste. Combeferre has told you decisive things: there are men among you who have families, mothers, sisters, wives, and children. Such must leave the ranks."

Not a soul stirred.

"Married men and supporters of families will leave the ranks," Marius repeated.

His authority was great, for, though Enjolras was really the chief of the barricade, Marius was its saviour.

"I order it," Enjolras cried.

"I implore it," Marius said.

Then these heroic men, stirred up by Combeferre's speech, shaken by Enjolras' order, and moved by Marius' entreaty, began denouncing one another. "It is true," a young man said to a middle-aged man, "you are a father of a family—

begone!" "No! you ought to do so rather," the man replied, "for you have two sisters to support;" and an extraordinary contest broke out, in which each struggled not to be thrust out of the tomb.

"Make haste," said Combeferre, "in a quarter of an hour there will no longer be time."

"Citizens," Enjolras added, "we have a republic here, and universal suffrage reigns. Point out yourselves the men who are to leave us."

They obeyed, and at the end of a few minutes five were unanimously pointed out and left the ranks.

"There are five of them!" Marius exclaimed.

There were only four uniforms.

"Well," the five replied, "one will have to remain behind."

And it was who should remain, and who should find reasons for others not to remain. The generous quarrel recommenced.

"You have a wife who loves you." "You have your old mother." "You have neither father nor mother; so what will become of your three little brothers?" "You are the father of five children." "You have a right to live, for you are only seventeen, and it is too early to die."

These great revolutionary barricades were meeting-places of heroisms. The improbable was simple there, and these men did not astonish one another.

"Make haste," Courfeyrac repeated.

Somebody cried out from the group, to Marius.

"You must point out the one who is to remain."

"Yes!" the five said, "do you choose, and we will obey you."

Marius did not believe himself capable of any emotion; still at this idea of choosing a man for death all the blood flowed back to his heart, and he would have turned pale could he have grown paler. He walked up to the five, who smiled upon him, and each, with his eye full of that great flame which gleams through history on Thermopylæ, cried to him:

"Me! me! me!"

And Marius stupidly counted them. There were still five! then his eyes settled on the four uniforms. All at once a fifth uniform fell, as if from heaven, on the other four; the fifth man was saved. Marius raised his eyes, and recognised M. Fauchelevent. Jean Valjean had just entered the barricade; either through information he had obtained, through



instinct, or through accident, he arrived by the Mondétour lane, and, thanks to his National Guard uniform, passed without difficulty. The vedette stationed by the insurgents in the Rue Mondétour had no cause to give the alarm signal for a single National Guard, and had let him enter the street, saying to himself, "He is probably a reinforcement, or at the worst a prisoner." The moment was too serious for a sentry to turn away from his duty or his post of observation. At the moment when Jean Valjean entered the redoubt, no one noticed him, for all eyes were fixed on the five chosen men and the four uniforms. Jean Valjean, however, had seen and heard, and silently took off his coat and threw it on the pile formed by the other coats. The emotion was indescribable.

"Who is this man?" Bossuet asked.

"He is a man," Combeferre replied, "who saves his fellow-man."

Marius added in a grave voice :

"I know him."

This bail was sufficient for all, and Enjolras turned to Jean Valjean.

"Citizen, you are welcome."

And he added :

"You are aware that you will die."

Jean Valjean, without answering, helped the insurgent whom he had saved to put on his uniform.

## CHAPTER CI.

THE situation of all, in this fatal hour, and at this inexorable spot, had as resultant and apex the supreme melancholy of Enjolras. Enjolras had within him the plenitude of the revolution ; he was imperfect, however, so far as the absolute can be so ; he had too much of St. Just and not enough of Anacharsis Clootz ; still his mind, in the society of the Friends of the A B C, had eventually received a certain magnetism of Combeferre's ideas. For some time past he had been gradually emerging from the narrow form of dogmatism and yielding to the expansion of progress, and in the end he had accepted, as the definitive and magnificent evolution, the transformation of the great French republic into the immense human republic. As for the immediate means, in a violent situation, he wished them to be violent ;

in that he did not vary ; and he still belonged to that epic and formidable school which is resumed in the words "'93." Enjolras was standing on the paving-stone steps, with one of his elbows on the muzzle of his gun. He was thinking ; he trembled, as men do when a blast passes ; for spots where death lurks produce this tripodal effect. A sort of stifled fire came from his eye. All at once he raised his head, his light hair fell back like that of the angel on the dark quadriga composed of stars, and he cried :

" Citizens, do you picture to yourselves the future ? The streets of towns inundated with light, green branches on the thresholds, the nation's sisters, men just, old men blessing children, the past loving the present, men thinking at perfect liberty, believers enjoying perfect equality, for religion, heaven, God, the direct priest, the human conscience converted into an altar. no more hatred, the fraternity of the workshop and the school, notoriety the sole punishment and reward, work for all, right for all, peace for all, no more bloodshed, no more wars, and happy mothers ! To subdue matter is the first step, to realise the ideal is the second. Reflect on what progress has already done ; formerly the first human races saw the terror the hydra that breathed upon the waters, the dragon that vomited fire, the griffin which was the monster of the air, and which flew with the wings of an eagle and the claws of a tiger, pass before their eyes, frightful beasts which were below man. Man, however, set his snares, the sacred snares of intellect, and ended by catching the monsters in them. We have subdued the hydra, and it is called the steamer ; we have tamed the dragon, and it is called the locomotive ; we are on the point of taming the griffin, we hold it already, and it is called the balloon. The day on which that Promethean task is terminated and man has definitively attached to his will the triple antique chimera, the dragon, the hydra, and the griffin, he will be master of water, fire, and air, and he will be to the rest of animated creation what the ancient gods were formerly to him. Courage, and forward ! Citizens, whither are we going ? to science made the government, to the strength of things converted into the sole public strength, to the natural law having its sanction, and penalty in itself and promulgating itself by evidence, and to a sunrise of truth corresponding with the dawn of day. We are proceeding to a union of the peoples ; we are proceeding to a unity of man.



No more fictions, no more parasites. The real governed by the true, is our object. Civilisation will hold its assize on the summit of Europe, and eventually in the centre of the continent, in a great parliament of intellect. Something like this has been seen already; the Amphictyons held two sessions a year—one at Delphi, the place of the gods, the other at Thermopylæ, the place of souls. Europe will have her Amphictyons, the globe will have its Amphictyons. France bears the sublime future within her, and this is the gestation of the nineteenth century. What Greece sketched out is worthy of being finished by France. Listen to me. Feuilly, valiant workman, man of the people, man of the peoples, I venerate thee; yes, thou seest clearly future times, yes, thou art right. Thou hast neither father nor mother, Feuilly, and thou hast adopted humanity as thy mother, and right as thy father. Thou art about to die here, that is to say, to triumph. Citizens, whatever may happen to-day, we are about to make a revolution, by our defeat as well as by our victory. In the same way as conflagrations light up a whole city, revolutions light up the whole human race. And what a revolution shall we make? I have just told you, the revolution of the True. From the political point of view, there is but one principle, the sovereignty of man over himself. This sovereignty of myself over myself is called liberty, and where two or three of these liberties are associated the State begins. But in this association there is no abdication, and each sovereignty concedes a certain amount of itself to form the common right. This quality is the same for all, and this identity of concession which each makes to all, is called Equality. The common right is nought but the protection of all radiating over the right of each. This protection of all over each is called Fraternity. The point of intersection of all these aggregated sovereignties is called Society, and this intersection being a junction, the point is a knot. Hence comes what is called the social tie. Some say the social contract, which is the same thing, as the word contract is etymologically formed with the idea of a tie. Let us come to an understanding about equality, for if liberty be the summit, equality is the base. Equality, citizens, is not the whole of society on a level, a society of tall blades of grass and small oaks, or a number of entangled jealousies; it is, civilly, every aptitude having the same opening;



politically, all votes having the same weight and religiously, all consciences having the same right. Equality has an organ in gratuitous and compulsory education and it should begin with the right to the alphabet. The primary school imposed on all, the secondary school offered to all, such is the law, and from the identical school issues equal instruction. Yes, instruction! Light! light! everything comes from light and everything returns to it. Citizens, the nineteenth century is great, but the twentieth century will be happy. Then there will be nothing left resembling ancient history. Men will no longer have to fear, as at the present day, a conquest, an invasion, usurpation, an armed rivalry of nations, an interruption of civilisation depending on a marriage of kings, a birth in hereditary tyrannies, a division of peoples by Congress, a dismemberment by the collapse of dynasties, a combat of two religions, clashing like two goats of the darkness, on the bridge of infinity; there will be no cause longer to fear famine, exhaustion, prostitution through distress, misery through want of work, and the scaffold, and the sword, and battles, and all the brigandages of chance in the forest of events. We might almost say there will be no more events, we shall be happy. The human race will accomplish its law as the terrestrial globe fulfils its law; harmony will be restored between the soul and the planet, and the soul will gravitate round the truth as the planet does round light. Friends, the hour we are now standing in is a gloomy hour, but there are such terrible purchases of the future. Oh! the human race will be delivered, relieved, and consoled! We affirm it on this barricade, and where should the cry of love be raised if not on the summit of the sacrifice? Oh, my brothers, this is the point of junction between those who think and those who suffer, this barricade is not made of paving-stones, beams, and iron bars, it is made of two aggregations, one of ideas and one of sufferings. Misery here encounters the ideal; day embraces the night there, and says to it, I am about to die with thee, and thou wilt be born again with me. Faith springs from the embrace of all the desolations; suffering bring hither their agony and ideas their immortality. This agony and this immortality are about to be mingled and compose one death. Brothers, the man who dies here dies in the radiance of the future, and we shall enter a tomb all filled with dawn."



been heightened. By the advice of the vedette who had been watching the region of the markets, Enjolras, through fear of a surprise in the rear, formed a serious resolution. He barricaded the small passage of the Mondétour lane, which had hitherto remained free, and for this purpose a further portion of the street was unpaved. In this way the barricade, walled in on three sides—in front by the Rue de la Chanvrerie, on the left by the Rue du Cygne, and on the right by the Rue Mondétour—was truly almost impregnable, but it is true that they were fatally enclosed within it. It had three fronts but no issue; it was a fortress but a mousetrap, as Courfeyrac said with a smile. Enjolras had some thirty paving-stones piled up by the door of the inn, which, as Bossuet said, had been “removed over and above.” The silence was now so profound in the direction whence the attack must come, that Enjolras ordered all his men to return to their fighting-posts, and a ration of brandy was distributed to each man.

They had not long to wait. A rattling of chains, the alarming rolling of a heavy weight, a clang of bronze leaping on the pavement, and a species of solemn noise, announced that a sinister engine was approaching. There was a tremor in the entrails of these old peaceful streets, pierced and built for the fruitful circulation of interests and ideas, and which are not made for the monstrous rolling of the wheels of war. The fixity of the eyes turned toward the end of the street became stern, as a cannon appeared. The gunners pushed the gun on; the limber was detached, and two men supported the carriage, while four were at the wheels, others followed with the tumbril, and the lighted match could be seen smoking.

“Fire!” shouted Enjolras.

The whole barricade burst into a flame, and the detonation was frightful; an avalanche of smoke covered and concealed the gun and the men. A few seconds after the cloud was dispersed, and the gun and the men reappeared; the gunners were bringing it up to the front of the barricade, slowly, correctly, and without hurry, not one had been wounded. Then the captain of the gun, hanging with his whole weight on the breech to elevate the muzzle, began pointing the gun, with the gravity of an astronomer setting a telescope.

“Bravo for the gunners!” cried Bossuet.

And all the men at the barricade clapped their hands. A moment after the gun, standing in the very centre of the

street across the gutter, was in position, and a formidable mouth yawned at the barricade.

"Come, we are going to be gay," said Courfeyrac, "here is the brute; after the fillip, the blow with the fist. The army is extending its heavy paw toward us, and the barricade is going to be seriously shaken. The musketry fire feels, and the cannon takes."

"Reload your guns," said Enjolras.

In what manner would the facing of the barricade behave against a cannon-ball? would a breach be formed? that was the question. While the insurgents were reloading their guns the artillerymen loaded the cannon. The anxiety within the redoubt was profound; the shot was fired, and the detonation burst forth.

"Present!" a joyous voice cried.

And at the same time as the cannon-ball struck the barricade, Gavroche bounded inside it. He came from the direction of the Rue du Cygne, and actively clambered over the accessory barricade which fronted the labyrinth of the little Truanderie. Gavroche produced a greater effect at the barricade than the cannon-ball did; for the latter was lost in the heap of rubbish. It had broken a wheel of the omnibus, and finished the old truck; on seeing which the insurgents bursts into a laugh.

"Pray go on," Bossuet cried to the gunners.

Gavroche was surrounded, but he had no time to report anything, as Marius, shuddering, drew him on one side.

"What have you come to do here?"

"What a question?" the boy said, "and you, pray?"

And he gazed fixedly at Marius with his epic effrontery: his eyes were dilated by the proud brightness which they contained. It was with a stern accent that Marius continued:

"Who told you to return? I only trust that you have delivered my letter at its address."

Gavroche felt some degree of remorse in the matter of the letter; for, in his hurry to return to the barricade, he had got rid of it rather than delivered it. He was forced to confess to himself that he had confided somewhat too lightly in this stranger, whose face he had not even been able to distinguish. It is true that this man was bareheaded, but that was not enough. In short, he reproached himself quietly for his conduct, and feared Marius' reproaches. He took the simplest process to get out of the scrape—he told an abominable falsehood.



"Citizen, I delivered the letter to the porter. The lady was asleep, and she will have the letter when she wakes."

Marius had two objects in sending the letter,—to bid Cosette farewell and save Gavroche. He was obliged to satisfy himself with one half of what he wanted. The connection between the sending of the letter and M. Fauchelevent's presence at the barricade occurred to his mind, and he pointed him out to Gavroche.

"Do you know that man?"

"No," said Gavroche.

Gavroche, in truth, as we know, had only seen Jean Valjean by night. The troubled and sickly conjectures formed in Marius' mind were dissipated; did he know M. Fauchelevent's opinions? perhaps he was a republican. Hence his presence in the action would be perfectly simple. In the meanwhile, Gavroche had run to the other end of the barricade, crying, "My gun!" and Courfeyrac ordered it to be given to him. Gavroche warned "his comrades," as he called them, that the barricade was surrounded; and that he had found great difficulty in reaching it. A battalion of the line, with their arms piled in the little Truanderie, was observing on the side of the Rue du Petit Cygne, on the opposite side the Municipal Guard occupied the Rue des Prêcheurs, while in front of them they had the main body of the army. This information given, Gavroche added:

"I authorise you to give them a famous pill."

Enjolras was in the meanwhile watching at his loophole with open ears; for the assailants, doubtless little satisfied with the gunshot, had not repeated it. A company of line infantry had come up to occupy the extremity of the street behind the gun. The soldiers unpaved the street, and erected with the stones a small low wall, a species of breast-work, only eighteen inches high, and facing the barricade. At the left-hand angle of this work could be seen the head of a suburban column, massed in the Rue St. Denis. Enjolras, from his post, fancied he could hear the peculiar sound produced by canister when taken out of its box, and he saw the captain of the gun change his aim and turn the gun's muzzle slightly to the left. Then the gunners began loading, and the captain of the gun himself took the port-fire and walked up to the vent.

"Fall on your knees all along the barricade," Enjolras shouted.

The insurgents, who were scattered in front of the wine-

shop, and who had left their posts on Gavroche's arrival, rushed pell-mell toward the barricade; but ere Enjolras' order was executed, the discharge took place with the frightful rattle of a round of grapeshot; it was one, in fact. The shot was aimed at the opening in the redoubt, and ricocheted against the wall, killing two men and wounding three. If this continued the barricade would be no longer tenable, for the grapeshot entered it. There was a murmur of consternation.

"Let us stop a second round," Enjolras said: and, levelling his gun, he aimed at the firer, who was leaning over the breech and rectifying the aim. The firer was a handsome young sergeant of artillery, fair, gentle-faced, and having the intelligent look peculiar to that predestined and formidable arm which, owing to its constant improvement, must end by killing war. Combeferre, who was standing by Enjolras' side, gazed at this young man.

"What a pity," said Combeferre, "what a hideous thing such butchery is! Well, when there are no kings left, there will be no war. Enjolras, you aim at that sergeant, but do not notice him. Just reflect that he is a handsome young man; he is intrepid. You can see that he is a thinker, and these young artillerymen are well educated; he has a father, mother, and family; he is probably in love, he is but twenty-five years of age at the most, and might be your brother."

"He is so," said Enjolras.

"Yes," Combeferre added, "and mine too. Do not kill him."

"Let me alone. It must be."

And a tear slowly coursed down Enjolras' marble cheek. At the same time he pulled the trigger and the fire flashed forth. The artilleryman turned twice on his heel, with his arms stretched out before him, and his head raised as if to breathe the air, and then fell across the cannon motionless. His back could be seen, from the middle of which a jet of blood gushed forth; the bullet had gone right through his chest, and he was dead. It was necessary to bear him away and fill up his place, and thus a few minutes were gained. Opinions varied in the barricade, for the firing of the piece was going to begin again, and the barricade could not hold out for a quarter of an hour under the grapeshot; it was absolutely necessary to deaden the rounds. Enjolras gave the command.



"We must have a mattress, then."

"We have none," said Combeferre, "the wounded are lying on them."

Jean Valjean, seated apart on a bench, near the corner of the wine-shop, with his gun between his legs, had not up to the present taken any part in what was going on. He did not seem to hear the combatants saying around him, "There is a gun that does nothing." On hearing the order given by Enjolras, he rose. It will be remembered that on the arrival of the insurgents in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, an old woman, in her terror of the bullets, placed her mattress in front of her window. This window, a garret window, was on the roof of a six-storeyed house, a little beyond the barricade. The mattress, placed crosswise, leaned at the bottom upon two clothes-props, and was held above by two ropes, which, at a distance, seemed like pack-thread, and which were fastened to nails driven into the mantelpiece. These cords could be distinctly seen against the sky, like hairs.

"Can any one lend me a double-barrelled carbine?" Jean Valjean asked.

Enjolras, who had just reloaded his, handed it to him. Jean Valjean aimed at the garret-window and fired; one of the two cords of the mattress was cut asunder, and it only hung by one thread. Jean Valjean fired the second shot, and the second cord lashed the garret-window; the mattress glided between the two poles and fell into the street. The insurgents applauded, and every voice cried:

"There is a mattress."

"Yes," said Combeferre, "but who will go and fetch it?"

The mattress, in truth, had fallen outside the barricade, between the besiegers and besieged. Now, as the death of the sergeant of artillery had exasperated the troops, for some time past they had been lying flat behind the pile of paving-stones which they had raised; and in order to make up for the enforced silence of the gun, they had opened fire on the barricade. The insurgents, wishing to save their ammunition, did not return this musketry: the fusillade broke against the barricade, but the street which it filled with bullets was terrible. Jean Valjean stepped out of the gap, entered the street, passed through the hail of bullets, went to the mattress, picked it up, placed it on his back, and, re-entering the barricade, he himself placed the mattress in the gap, and fixed it against the wall, so that

the gunners should not see it. This done, they waited for the next round, which was soon fired. The gun belched forth its canister with a hoarse roar, but there was no ricochet, and the grapeshot was checked by the mattress. The expected result was obtained, and the barricade saved.

"Citizen," Enjolras said to Jean Valjean, "the republic thanks you."

Bossuet admired, and laughingly said :

"It is immoral for a mattress to have so much power : it is the triumph of that which yields over that which thunders. But no matter, glory to the mattress that annuls a cannon !"

## CHAPTER CII.

At that moment Cosette awoke. Her bedroom was narrow, clean, discreet, with a long window on the east side looking out into the courtyard of the house. Cosette knew nothing of what was going on in Paris, for she had returned to her bedroom at the time when Toussaint said, "There is a row." Cosette had slept but a few hours, though well. She had had sweet dreams, which resulted perhaps from the fact that her small bed was very white. Somebody, who was Marius, appeared to her in light ; and she rose with the sun in her eyes, which at first produced the effect of a continuation of her dream upon her. Her first thought on coming out of the dream was of a smiling nature, and she felt quite reassured. Like Jean Valjean a few hours before, she was passing through that reaction of the soul which absolutely desires no misfortune. She began hoping with all her strength, without knowing why, and then suffered from a contraction of the heart. She had not seen Marius for three days, but she said to herself that he must have received her letter, that he knew where she was, and that he was so clever, and would find means to get to her,—and most certainly to-day, and perhaps that very morning. It was bright day, but the sunbeam was nearly horizontal, and so she thought that it must be early, but that she ought to rise in order to receive Marius. She felt that she could not live without Marius, and that consequently was sufficient, and Marius would come. No objection was admissible, all this was certain. It was monstrous enough to have suffered for three days : Marius absent for three days, that was



horrible on the part of the good God. Now this cruel suspense sent from on high was a trial passed through; Marius was about to come and bring good news. Thus is youth constituted: it wipes away its tears quickly, and finding sorrow useless, does not accept it. Youth is the smile of the future of an unknown thing, which is itself: it is natural for it to be happy, and it seems as if its breath were made of hope.

However, Cosette could not succeed in recalling to mind what Marius had said to her on the subject of this absence, which was only to last one day, and what explanation he had given her about it. Every one will have noticed with what skill a coin let fall on the ground runs to hide itself, and what art it has in rendering itself invisible. There are thoughts which play us the same trick; they conceal themselves in a corner of our brain: it is all over, they are lost, and it is impossible to recall them to memory. Cosette felt somewhat vexed at the little useless effort her memory made, and said to herself that it was very wrong and culpable of her to forget words pronounced by Marius. She left her bed, and performed the two ablutions of the soul and the body, her prayers and her toilette.

Everybody was still asleep in the house. No shutter was opened, and the porter's lodge was still closed. Toussaint was not up, and Cosette naturally thought that her father was asleep. She must have suffered greatly, and must still be suffering, for she said to herself that her father had been unkind, but she reckoned on Marius. The eclipse of such a light was decidedly impossible. At moments she heard some distance off a sort of heavy shock, and thought how singular it was that gates were opened and shut at so early an hour; it was the sound of the cannon-balls battering the barricade. There was a martin's nest a few feet below Cosette's window in the old smoke-blackened cornice, and the mouth of the nest projected a little beyond the cornice, so that the interior of this little Paradise could be seen from above. The mother was there expanding her wings like a fan over her brood; the male bird fluttered round, went away, and then returned, bringing in his bill food and kisses. The rising day gilded this happy thing, the great law, increase and multiply, was there smiling and august, and the sweet mystery was unfolded in the glory of the morn. Cosette, with her hair in the sunshine, her soul in flames, enlightened by love within and the dawn without,



bent forward as if mechanically, and, almost without daring to confess to herself that she was thinking at the same time of Marius, she began looking at these birds, this family, this male and female, this mother and her little ones, with all the profound restlessness which the sight of a nest gives to a maiden.

## CHAPTER CIII.

THE fire of the assailants continued. The musketry and grapeshot alternated, though without producing much mischief. The upper part of Corinth alone suffered, and the first-floor and garret-windows, pierced by slugs and bullets, gradually lost their shape. The combatants posted there were compelled to withdraw, but, in fact, such are the tactics of an attack on a barricade, to skirmish for a long time and exhaust the ammunition of the insurgents, if they commit the error of returning the fire. When it is discovered by the slackening of their fire that they have no powder or ball left, the assault is made. Enjolras had not fallen into this trap, and the barricade did not reply. At each platoon fire, Gavroche thrust his tongue into his cheek, a sign of supreme disdain.

"That's good," he said, "tear up the linen, for we require lint."

Courfeyrac addressed the grapeshot on its want of effect, and said to the cannon :

"You are becoming diffuse, my good fellow."

In a battle, intrigues take place as at a ball ; and it is probable that the silence of the redoubt was beginning to render the assailants anxious, and make them fear lest some unexpected incident had occurred. They felt a need of seeing clearly through this pile of paving-stones, and what was going on behind this impassive wall, which received shots without answering them. The insurgents suddenly perceived a helmet glistening in the sun upon an adjoining roof ; a sapper was leaning against a tall chimney-pot and apparently a sentry there. He looked down into the barricade.

"That's a troublesome spy," said Enjolras.

Jean had returned Enjolras his fowling-piece, but still had his own musket. Without saying a word he aimed at the sapper, and a second later the helmet, struck by a bullet,



fell noisily into the street. The soldier disappeared with all possible haste. A second watchman took his place, and it was an officer. Jean Valjean, who had reloaded his musket, aimed at the new-comer, and sent the officer's helmet to join the private's. The officer was not obstinate, but withdrew very quickly. This time the hint was understood, and no one again appeared on the roof.

"Why did you not kill the man?" Bossuet asked Jean Valjean, who, however, made no reply.

Bossuet muttered in Combeferre's ear :

"He has not answered my question."

"He is a man who does kind actions with musket-shots," said Combeferre.

Those who have any recollection of this now distant epoch know that the suburban National Guards were valiant against the insurrection, and they were peculiarly brave and obstinate in the days of June, 1832.

Zeal sometimes went as far as extermination; a platoon of National Guards constituted themselves of their own authority a council of war, and tried and executed in five minutes an insurgent prisoner. It was an improvisation of this nature which killed Jean Prouvaire. On June 6, 1832, a company of suburban National Guards, commanded by Captain Fannicot, to whom we have already referred, decimated the Rue de la Chanvrerie for his own good pleasure, and on his own authority. This fact, singular though it is, was proved by the judicial report drawn up in consequence of the insurrection of 1832. Captain Fannicot, an impatient and bold bourgeois, a species of condottiere of order, and a fanatical and insubmissive governmentalist, could not resist the attraction of firing prematurely, and taking the barricade all by himself, that is to say, with his company. Exasperated at the successive apparition of the red flag and the old coat, which he took for the black flag, he loudly blamed the generals and commanders of corps, who were holding counsel, as they did not think the decisive moment for assault had arrived, but were "letting the insurrection stew in its own gravy," according to a celebrated expression of one of them. As for him, he thought the barricade ripe, and as everything that is ripe is bound to fall he made the attempt.

He commanded men as resolute as himself. "Madmen," a witness called them. His company, the same which had shot Jean Prouvaire, was the first of the battalion posted at



the street corner. At the moment when it was least expected the captain dashed his men at the barricade, but this movement, executed with more goodwill than strategy, cost Fannicot's company dearly. Before it had covered two-thirds of the street a general discharge from the barricade greeted it; four, the boldest men of all, running at the head, were shot down in point-blank range at the very foot of the barricade, and this courageous mob of National Guards, very brave men, but not possessing the military tenacity, was compelled to fall back after a few moments, leaving fifteen corpses in the street. The momentary hesitation gave the insurgents time to reload, and a second and most deadly discharge assailed the company before the men were able to regain their shelter at the corner of the street. In a moment they were caught between two fires, and received the volley from the cannon, which, having no orders to the contrary, did not cease firing. The intrepid and imprudent Fannicot was one of those killed by this round of grape-shot: he was laid low by the cannon. This attack, which was more furious than serious, irritated Enjolras.

"The asses!" he said, "they have their men killed and expend our ammunition for nothing."

Enjolras spoke like the true general of the riot that he was: insurrection and repression do not fight with equal arms; for the insurrection, which can be soon exhausted, has only a certain number of rounds to fire and of combatants to expend. An expended cartouche-box and a killed man cannot have their place filled up. Repression, on the other hand, having the army, does not count men, and bare Vincennes does not count rounds. Repression has as many regiments as the barricade has men, and as many arsenals as the barricade has cartouche-boxes. Hence these are always contests of one man against a hundred, which ever end by the destruction of the barricade, unless revolution, suddenly dashing up, casts into the balance its flashing archangel's glaive.

Courfeyrac, seated on a stone beside Enjolras, continued to insult the cannon, and each time that the gloomy shower of projectiles which is called a grapeshot passed, with its monstrous noise, he greeted it with an ironical remark.

"You are wasting your breath, my poor old brute, and I feel sorry for you, as your row is thrown away. That is not thunder, but a cough."

And those around him laughed. Courfeyrac and Bossuet,



whose valiant good-humour increased with danger, made up for the want of food, like Madame Scarron, by jests, and as wine was short, poured out gaiety for all.

"I admire Enjolras," Bossuet said, "and his temerity astonishes me. He lives alone, which, perhaps, renders him a little sad; and Enjolras is to be pitied for his greatness, which attaches him to widowhood. We fellows have all, more or less, mistresses, who make us mad, that is to say brave, and when a man is as full of love as a tiger, the least he can do is to fight like a lion. That is a way of avenging ourselves for the tricks which our grisettes play us. Roland lets himself be killed to vex Angelique, and all our heroism comes from our women. A man without a woman is like a pistol without a hammer, and it is the woman who makes the man go off. Well, Enjolras has no woman, he is not in love, and finds means to be intrepid. It is extraordinary that a man can be cold as ice and daring as fire."

Enjolras did not appear to listen; but any one who had been near him might have heard him murmur in a low voice, "*Patria*." Bossuet laughed again, when Courfeyrac shouted:

"Here's something fresh."

And assuming the voice of a groom of the chambers, who announces a visitor, he added:

"Mr. Eight-Pounder."

In fact, a new character had come on the stage; it was a second piece of artillery. The gunners rapidly got it into position by the side of the first one, and this was the beginning of the end. A few minutes later both guns, being actively served, were at work against the barricade, and the platoon fire of the line and the suburban National Guards supported the artillery. Another cannonade was audible some distance off. At the same time as the two guns were furiously assaulting the redoubt in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, two other pieces placed in position, one in the Rue St. Denis, the other in the Rue Aubrey-le-Boucher, were pounding the St. Merry barricade. The four guns formed a lugubrious echo to each other. Of the two guns now opened on the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, one fired shell, the other solid shot. The gun which fired the latter was pointed at a slight elevation, and the firing was so calculated that the ball struck the extreme edge of the crest of the barricades, and hurled the broken paving-stones on the heads of the insurgents. This mode of fire was intended to drive the

combatants from the top of the redoubt, and compel them to close up in the interior; that is to say, it announced the assault. Once the combatants were driven from the top of the barricade by the cannon and from the windows of the public-house by the canister, the columns of attack could venture into the street without being aimed at, perhaps without even being seen, suddenly escalate the barricade, as on the previous evening, and take it by surprise.

"The annoyance of these guns must be reduced," said Enjolras, and he shouted, "Fire at the artillerymen."

All were ready,—the barricade, which had so long been silent, was belted with flame; seven or eight rounds succeeded each other with a sort of rage and joy; the street was filled with a blinding smoke, and at the expiration of a few minutes there might be confusedly seen through the mist, all striped with flame, two-thirds of the artillerymen lying under the gun-wheels. Those who remained standing continued to serve the guns with a stern tranquillity, but the fire was reduced.

"Things are going well," said Bossuet to Enjolras, "that is a success."

Enjolras shook his head, and replied:

"Another quarter of an hour of that success, and there will not be a dozen cartridges left in the barricade."

It appears that Gavroche heard the remark, for Courfeyrac all at once perceived somebody in the street, at the foot of the barricade, amid the shower of bullets. Gavroche had fetched a hamper from the pot-house, passed through the gap, and was quickly engaged in emptying into it the full cartouche-boxes of the National Guards killed on the slope of the barricade.

"What are you doing there?" Courfeyrac said.

Gavroche looked up.

"Citizen, I am filling my hamper."

"Do you not see the grapeshot?"

Gavroche replied:

"Well, it is raining, what then?"

Courfeyrac cried, "Come in."

"Directly," said Gavroche.

And with one bound he reached the street. It will be borne in mind that Fannicot's company, in retiring, left behind it a number of corpses; some twenty dead lay here and there all along the pavement of the street. That made twenty cartouche-boxes for Gavroche, and a stock of



cartridges for the barricade. The smoke lay in the street like a fog; any one who has seen a cloud in a mountain gorge, between two precipitous escarpments, can form an idea of this smoke, contracted, and as it were rendered denser, by the two dark lines of tall houses. It rose slowly, and was incessantly renewed; whence came a gradual obscurity, which dulled even the bright daylight. The combatants could scarce see each other from either end of the street, which was, however, very short. This darkness, probably desired and calculated on by the chiefs who were about to direct the assault on the barricade, was useful for Gavroche. Under the cloak of this smoke, and thanks to his shortness, he was enabled to advance a considerable distance along the street unnoticed, and he plundered the first seven or eight cartouche-boxes without any great danger. He crawled on his stomach, galloped on all-fours, took his hamper in his teeth, writhed, glided, undulated, wound from one corpse to another, and emptied the cartouche-box as a monkey opens a nut. They did not cry to him from the barricade, to which he was still rather close, to return, for fear of attracting attention to him. On one corpse, which was a corporal's, he found a powder-flask.

"For thirst," he said, as he put it in his pocket.

While moving forward he at length reached the point where the fog of the fire became transparent, so that the sharpshooters of the line drawn up behind their parapet of paving-stones, and the National Guard at the corner of the street, all at once pointed out to each other something stirring in the street. At the moment when Gavroche was taking the cartridges from a sergeant lying near a post a bullet struck the corpse.

"Oh! for shame," said Gavroche, "they are killing my dead for me."

A second bullet caused the stones to strike fire close to him, while a third upset his hamper. Gavroche looked and saw that it came from the National Guards. He stood upright, with his hair floating in the breeze, his hand on his hips, and his eyes fixed on the National Guards who were firing, and he sang:

On est laid à Nanterre,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire,  
Et bête à Palaiseau,  
C'est la faute à Rousseau.

Then he picked up his hamper, put into it the cartridges scattered around without missing one, and walked toward the firing-party, to despoil another cartouche-box. Then a fourth bullet missed him. Gavroche sang :

Je ne suis pas notaire,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire,  
Je suis petit oiseau,  
C'est la faute à Rousseau.

A fifth bullet only succeeded so far as to draw a third couplet from him :

Joie est mon caractère,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire :  
Misère est mon trousseau,  
C'est la faute à Rousseau.

They went on for some time longer, and the sight was at once terrific and charming ; Gavroche, while fired at, ridiculed the firing, and appeared to be greatly amused. He was like a sparrow deriding the sportsmen, and answered each discharge by a couplet. The troops aimed at him incessantly, and constantly missed him, and the National Guards and the soldiers laughed, while covering him. He lay down, then rose again, hid himself in a doorway, then bounded, disappeared, reappeared, ran off, came back, replied to the grapeshot by taking a sight, and all the while plundered cartridges, emptied boxes, and filled his hamper. The insurgents watched him, as they panted with anxiety, but while the barricade trembled he sang. He was not a child, he was not a man, he was a strange goblin gamin, and he resembled the invulnerable dwarf of the combat. The bullets ran after him, but he was more active than they ; he played a frightful game of hide-and-seek with death : and each time that the snub-nosed face of the spectre approached the gamin gave it a fillip. One bullet, however, better aimed or more treacherous than the rest, at length struck the will-o'-the-wisp lad ; Gavroche was seen to totter and then sink. The whole barricade uttered a cry, but there was an Antæus in this pigmy : for a gamin to touch the pavement is like the giant touching the earth ; and Gavroche had only fallen to rise again. He remained in a sitting posture, a long jet of blood ran down his face, he raised both arms in the air, looked in the direction whence the shot had come, and began singing :



## LES MISÉRABLES.

Je suis tombé par terre,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire :  
Le nez dans le ruisseau,  
C'est la faute à——

He did not finish, for a second shot from the same marksman stopped him short. This time he lay with his face on the pavement, and did not stir again. This little great soul had taken flight.

## CHAPTER CIV.

MARIUS had sprung out of the barricade. Combeferre had followed him. It was too late; Gavroche was dead. Combeferre brought in the hamper of cartridges, and Marius the boy. Alas! he thought he was requiting the son for what the father had done for his father; but Thénardier had brought in his father alive, while he brought in the lad dead. When Marius re-entered the barricade with Gavroche in his arms his face was inundated with blood, like the boy's; for, at the very instant when he stooped to pick up Gavroche, a bullet had grazed his skull, but he had not noticed it. Courfeyrac took off his neckcloth and bound Marius' forehead; Gavroche was deposited on the same table with Mabœuf, and the black shawl was spread over both bodies; it was large enough for the old man and the child. Combeferre distributed the cartridges which he had brought in, and they gave each man fifteen rounds to fire. Jean Valjean was still at the same spot, motionless on his bench. When Combeferre offered him his fifteen cartridges he shook his head.

"That is a strange eccentric," Combeferre said in a whisper to Enjolras. "He manages not to fight inside this barricade."

"Which does not prevent him from defending it," Enjolras answered.

"Heroism has its original characters," Combeferre resumed.

And Courfeyrac, who overheard him, said:

"He is a different sort from Father Mabœuf."

The redoubt in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, we repeat, appeared internally most calm; and all the incidents and phases were, or would shortly be, exhausted. The position had become from critical menacing, and from menacing was

probably about to become desperate. In proportion as the situation grew darker an heroic gleam more and more purpled the barricade. Suddenly, between two discharges, the distant sound of a clock striking was heard.

"It is midday," said Combeferre.

The twelve strokes had not died out ere Enjolras drew himself up to his full height, and hurled the loud cry from the top of the barricade :

"Take up the paving-stones into the house, and line the windows with them. One half of you to the stones, the other half to the muskets. There is not a moment to lose."

A party of sappers, with their axes on their shoulders, had just appeared in battle-array at the end of the street. This could only be the head of a column : and of what column ? evidently the column of attack ; for the sappers ordered to demolish the barricade always precede the troops told off to escalate it.

Enjolras' order was carried out with that correct speed peculiar to ships and barricades, the only two battlefields whence escape is impossible. In less than a minute two-thirds of the paving-stones which Enjolras had ordered to be piled up against the door of Corinth were carried to the first floor and attic, and before a second minute had passed these paving-stones, artistically laid on one another, walled up one-half of the window. A few spaces carefully arranged by Feuilly, the chief constructor, allowed the gun-barrels to pass through. This armament of the windows was the more easily effected because the grapeshot had ceased. The two cannon were now firing solid shot at the centre of the barricade, in order to make a hole, and if possible a breach, for the assault. When the stones intended for the final assault were in their places, Enjolras carried to the first floor the bottles he had placed under the table on which Maboëuf lay.

"Who will drink that ?" Bossuet asked him.

"They will," Enjolras answered.

Then the ground-floor window was also barricaded, and the iron bars which closed the door at night were held in readiness. The fortress was complete, the barricade was the rampart, and the wineshop the keep. With the paving-stones left over the gap was stopped up. As the defenders of a barricade are always obliged to save their ammunition, and the besiegers are aware of the fact, the latter combine their arrangements with a sort of irritating leisure, expose



themselves before the time to the fire, though more apparently than in reality, and take their ease. The preparations for the attack are always made with a certain methodical slowness, and after that comes the thunder. This slowness enabled Enjolras to revise and render everything perfect. He felt that since such men were about to die their death must be a masterpiece. He said to Marius :

"We are the two chiefs. I am going to give the final orders inside, while you remain outside and watch."

Marius posted himself in observation on the crest of the barricade, while Enjolras had the door of the kitchen, which it will be remembered served as the hospital, nailed up.

"No spattering on the wounded," he said.

He gave his final instructions in the ground-floor room in a sharp but wonderfully calm voice, and Feuilly listened and answered in the name of all.

"Have axes ready on the first floor to cut down the stairs. Have you them?"

"Yes," Feuilly answered.

"How many?"

"Two axes and a crowbar."

"Very good. In all twenty-six fighting-men left. How many guns are there?"

"Thirty-four."

"Eight too many. Keep those guns loaded like the others, and within reach. Place your sabres and pistols in your belts. Twenty men to the barricade. Six will ambush themselves in the garret and at the first-floor window, to fire on the assailants through the loopholes in the paving-stones. There must not be an idle workman here. Presently, when the drummer sounds the charge, the twenty men below will rush to the barricade, and the first to arrive will be the best placed."

These arrangements made, he turned to Javert, and said to him :

"I have not forgotten you."

And laying a pistol on the table, he added :

"The last man to leave here will blow out this spy's brains."

"Here?" a voice answered.

"No, let us not have this corpse near ours. It is easy to stride over the small barricade in Mondétour lane, as it is only four feet high. This man is securely bound, so lead him there and execute him."

Some one was at this moment even more stoical than Enjolras,—it was Javert. Here Jean Valjean appeared; he was mixed up with the group of insurgents, but stepped forward and said to Enjolras:

“Are you the Commandant?”

“Yes.”

“You thanked me just now.”

“In the name of the Republic. The barricade has two saviours, Marius Pontmercy and yourself.”

“Do you think that I deserve a reward?”

“Certainly.”

“Well, then, I ask one.”

“What is it?”

“To let me blow out that man’s brains myself.”

Javert raised his head, saw Jean Valjean, gave an imperceptible start, and said, “It is fair.”

As for Enjolras, he was reloading his gun. He looked around him.

“Is there no objection?”

And he turned to Jean Valjean.

“Take the spy.”

Jean Valjean took possession of Javert by seating himself on the end of the table. He seized the pistol, and a faint clink showed that he had cocked it. Almost at the same moment the bugle-call was heard.

“Mind yourselves,” Marius shouted from the top of the barricade.

Javert began laughing that noiseless laugh peculiar to him, and, looking intently at the insurgents, said to them:

“You are no healthier than I am.”

“All outside,” Enjolras cried.

The insurgents rushed tumultuously forth, and as they passed, Javert smote them on the back, so to speak, with the expression, “We shall meet again soon.”

So soon as Jean Valjean was alone with Javert, he undid the rope which fastened the prisoner round the waist, the knot of which was under the table. After this, he made him a signal to rise. Javert obeyed with that indefinable smile, in which the supremacy of enchained authority is condensed. Jean Valjean seized Javert by the martingale, as he would have taken an ox by its halter, and dragging him after him, quitted the wine-shop slowly, for Javert, having his feet hobbled, could only take very short steps. Jean Valjean held the pistol in his hand, and they thus crossed the inner



trapeze of the barricade ; the insurgents, prepared for the imminent attack, were looking the other way.

Marius alone, placed at the left extremity of the barricade, saw them pass. This group of the victim and his hangman was illumined by the sepulchral gleams which he had in his soul. Jean Valjean forced Javert to climb over the barricade with some difficulty, but did not loosen the cord. When they had crossed the bar, they found themselves alone in the lane, and no one could now see them, for the elbow formed by the houses hid them from the insurgents. The corpses removed from the barricade formed a horrible pile a few paces from them. Among the dead could be distinguished a livid face, dishevelled hair, a pierced hand, and a half-naked female bosom ; it was Eponine. Javert looked askance at this dead girl, and said with profound calmness :

" I fancy I know that girl."

Then he turned to Jean Valjean, who placed the pistol under his arm, and fixed on Javert a glance which had no need of words to say, " Javert, it is I."

Javert answered, " Take your revenge."

Jean Valjean took a knife from his pocket and opened it.

" A clasp-knife," Javert exclaimed. " You are right, that suits you better."

Jean Valjean cut the martingale which Javert had round his neck, then he cut the ropes on his wrists, and stooping down, those on his feet ; then rising again, he said, " You are free."

It was not easy to astonish Javert, still, master though he was of himself, he could not suppress his emotion ; he stood gaping and motionless, while Jean Valjean continued :

" I do not believe that I shall leave this place. Still, if by accident I do, I live under the name of Fauchelevent, at No. 7 Rue de l'Homme Armé."

Javert gave a tigerish frown, which opened a corner of his mouth, and muttered between his teeth :

" Take care."

" Begone," said Jean Valjean.

Javert added :

" You said Fauchelevent, Rue de l'Homme Armé ?"

" No. 7."

Javert repeated in a low voice,— " No. 7."

He buttoned his frock-coat, restored the military stiffness between his shoulders, made a half turn, crossed his arms while supporting his chin with one of his hands, and

walked off in the direction of the markets. Jean Valjean looked after him. After going a few yards, Javert turned and said :

"You annoy me. I would sooner be killed by you."

"Begone," said Jean Valjean.

Javert retired slowly, and a moment after turned the corner of the Rue des Prêcheurs. When Javert had disappeared, Jean Valjean discharged the pistol in the air, and then returned to the barricade, saying :

"It is all over."

This is what had taken place in the meanwhile. Marius, more occupied with the outside than the inside, had not hitherto attentively regarded the spy fastened up at the darkened end of the ground-floor room. When he saw him in the open daylight bestriding the barricade, he recognised him, and a sudden hope entered his mind. He remembered the inspector of the Rue de Pontoise, and the two pistols he had given him, which he, Marius, had employed at this very barricade, and he not only remembered his face, but recalled his name.

This recollection, however, was foggy and disturbed, like all his ideas. It was not an affirmation he made so much as a question which he asked himself. "Is that not the Police Inspector, who told me that his name was Javert?" Marius shouted to Enjolras, who had just stationed himself at the other end of the barricade :

"Enjolras !"

"What is it ?"

"What is that man's name ?"

"Which man ?"

"The police agent. Do you know his name ?"

"Of course I do, for he told it to us."

"What is it ?"

"Javert."

Marius started, but at this moment a pistol-shot was heard, and Jean Valjean reappeared, saying, "It is all over." A dreary chill passed through the heart of Marius.

The death-agony of the barricade was approaching. Everything added to the tragical majesty of this supreme moment. A thousand mysterious disturbances in the air, the breathing of armed masses set in motion in streets which could not be seen, the intermittent gallop of cavalry, the heavy concussion of artillery, the platoon firing and the cannonades crossing each other in the labyrinth of Paris ;



the smoke of the battle rising golden above the roofs' distant and vaguely terrible cries, flashes of menace everywhere, the tocsin of St. Merry, which now had the sound of a sob, the mildness of the season, the splendour of the sky, full of sunshine and clouds, the beauty of the day, and the fearful silence of the houses. For, since the previous evening, the two rows of houses in the Rue de la Chanvrerie had become two walls, ferocious walls with closed doors, closed windows, and closed shutters.

Suddenly the drum beat the charge, and the attack was a hurricane. On the previous evening the barricade had been silently approached in the darkness as by a boa, but, at present, in broad daylight, within this gutted street, surprise was impossible; besides, the armed force was unmasked, the cannon had begun the roar, and the troops rushed upon the barricade. Fury was now skill. A powerful column of line infantry, intersected at regular intervals by National Guards and dismounted Municipal Guards, and supported by heavy masses, that could be heard if not seen, debouched into the street at the double, with drums beating, bugles sounding, bayonets levelled, and sappers in front, and, imperturbable under the shower of projectiles, dashed straight at the barricade with all the weight of a bronze battering-ram. But the wall held out firmly, and the insurgents fired impetuously; the escalated barricade displayed a flashing mane. The attack was so violent that it was in a moment inundated by assailants; but it shook off the soldiers as the lion does the dogs, and it was only covered with besiegers as the cliff is with foam, to reappear a minute later, scarped, black, and formidable.

The columns, compelled to fall back, remained massed in the street, exposed but terrible, and answered the redoubt by a tremendous musketry-fire. Any one who has seen fireworks will remember the piece composed of a cross-fire of lightnings, which is called a bouquet. Imagine this bouquet, no longer vertical but horizontal, and bearing at the end of each jet a bullet, slugs, or iron balls, and scattering death. The barricade was beneath it. On either side was equal resolution: the bravery was almost barbarous, and was complicated by a species of heroic ferocity which began with self-sacrifice. It was the epoch when a National Guard fought like a Zouave. The troops desired to make an end of it, and



the insurrection wished to contend. The acceptance of death in the height of youth and health converts intrepidity into a frenzy, and each man in this action had the grandeur of the last hour. The street was covered with corpses. The barricade had Marius at one of its ends and Enjolras at the other. Enjolras, who carried the whole barricade in his head, reserved and concealed himself: three soldiers fell under his loophole without even seeing him, while Marius displayed himself openly, and made himself a mark. More than once half his body rose above the barricade. There is no more violent prodigal than a miser who takes the bit between his teeth, and no man more startling in action than a dreamer. Marius was formidable and pensive, and was in action as in a dream. He looked like a firing ghost. The cartridges of the besieged were becoming exhausted, but not so their sarcasms; and they laughed in the tornado of the tomb in which they stood.

The interior of the barricade was so sown with torn cartridges that it seemed as if there had been a snowstorm. The assailants had the numbers, and the insurgents the position. They were behind a wall, and crushed at point-blank range the soldiers who were stumbling over the dead and wounded. This barricade, built as it was, and admirably strengthened, was really one of those situations in which a handful of men holds a legion in check. Still, constantly recruited and growing beneath the shower of bullets, the column of attack inexorably approached, and now, little by little, step by step, but certainly, contracted round the barricade.

The assaults succeeded each other, and the horror became constantly greater. Then there broke out on this pile of paving-stones, in this Rue de la Chanvrerie, a struggle worthy of the walls of Troy. These sallow, ragged, and exhausted men, who had not eaten for four-and-twenty hours, who had not slept, who had only a few rounds more to fire, who felt their empty pockets for cartridges—these men, nearly all wounded, with head or arm bound round with a bloodstained blackish rag, having holes in their coat from which the blood flowed, scarce armed with bad guns and old rusty sabres, became Titans. The barricade was ten times approached, assaulted, escaladed, and never captured. To form an idea of the struggle it would be necessary to imagine a mass of terrible valour set on fire,



and that you are watching the flames. It was not a combat, but the interior of a furnace; mouths breathed flames there, and faces were extraordinary. The human form seemed impossible there, the combatants flashed flames, and it was a formidable sight to see these salamanders of the medley flitting about in this red smoke. The successive and simultaneous scenes of this butchery are beyond our power to depict, for epic alone has the right to fill ten thousand verses with a battle. They fought foot to foot, body to body, with pistol-shots, sabre-cuts, and fists, close by, at a distance, above, below, on all sides, from the roof of the house, from the wine-shop, and even from the traps of the cellars into which some had slipped. The odds were sixty to one, and the frontage of Corinth, half demolished, was hideous. The window, pock-marked with grapeshot, had lost glass and frame, and was only a shapeless hole, confusedly stopped up with paving-stones. Bossuet was killed, Feuilly was killed, Courfeyrac was killed, Joly was killed. Combeferre, pierced by three bayonet stabs in the breast at the moment when he was raising a wounded soldier, had only time to look up to heaven, and expired. Marius, still fighting, had received so many wounds, especially in the head, that his face disappeared in blood, and looked as if it were covered by a red handkerchief. Enjolras alone was not wounded; when he had no weapon he held out his arm to the right or left, and an insurgent placed some instrument in his hand. Of four swords, one more than Francis I. at Marignan, he now had but one stump remaining.

## CHAPTER CV.

WHEN there were none of the chiefs alive save Enjolras and Marius, who were at the two ends of the barricade, the centre, which had so long been supported by Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Feuilly, and Combeferre, yielded. The cannon, without making a practicable breach, had severely injured the centre of the redoubt, then the crest of the wall had disappeared under the balls and fallen down, and the fragments which had collected both inside and out had in the end formed two slopes, the outer one of which offered an inclined plane by which to attack. A final assault was attempted thus, and this assault was successful;



the mass, bristling with bayonets and hurled forward at a run, came up irresistibly, and the dense line of the attacking column appeared in the smoke on the top of the scarp. This time it was all over, and the band of insurgents defending the centre recoiled pell-mell.

Then the gloomy love of life was rekindled in some; covered by this forest of muskets, several did not wish to die. This is the moment when the spirit of self-preservation utters yells, and when the beast reappears in man. They were drawn up against the six-storeyed house at the back of the barricade, and this house might be their salvation. This house was barricaded, and, as it were, walled up from top to bottom, but before the troops reached the interior of the redoubt, a door would have time to open and shut, and it would be life for these desperate men, for at the back of this house were streets, possible flight, and space. They began kicking and knocking at the door, while calling, crying, imploring, and clasping their hands. But no one opened. The dead head looked down on them from the third-floor window. But Marius and Enjolras, and seven or eight men who had rallied round them, rushed forward to protect them. Enjolras shouted to the soldiers, "Keep back," and as an officer declined to obey he killed the officer. He was in the inner yard of the redoubt, close to Corinth, with his sword in one hand, and his carbine in the other, holding open the door of the wine-shop, which he barred against the assailants. He shouted to the desperate men, "There is only one door open, this one," and covering them with his person, and alone facing a battalion, he made them pass in behind him. All rushed in, and Enjolras, whirling his musket round his head, drove back the bayonets and entered last of all, and there was a frightful moment, during which the troops tried to enter and the insurgents to bar the door. The latter was closed with such violence that the five fingers of a soldier who had caught hold of the door-post were cut off clean, and remained in the crevice. Marius remained outside; a bullet had broken his collar-bone, and he felt himself fainting and falling. At this moment, when his eyes were already closed, he felt the shock of a powerful hand seizing him, and his fainting-fit scarce left him time for this thought, mingled with the supreme recollection of Cosette, "I am made prisoner. I shall be shot."

Enjolras, not seeing Marius among those who had sought



shelter in the house, had the same idea, but they had reached that moment when each could only think of his own death. Enjolras put the bar on the door, bolted and locked it, while the soldiers beat it with musket-butts, and the sappers attacked it with their axes outside. The assailants were grouped round this door, and the siege of the wine-shop now began. The soldiers, let us add, were full of fury; the death of the sergeant of artillery had irritated them, and then, more mournful still, during the few hours that preceded the attack a whisper ran along the ranks that the insurgents were mutilating their prisoners, and that there was the headless body of a soldier in the cellar. This species of fatal rumour is the general accompaniment of civil wars, and it was a false report of the same nature which at a later date produced the catastrophe of the Rue Transnonain. When the door was secured Enjolras said to the others :

“ Let us sell our lives dearly.”

Then he went up to the table on which Mabeuf and Gavroche were lying; under the black cloth two forms could be seen straight and rigid, one tall, the other short, and the two faces were vaguely outlined under the cold folds of the winding-sheet. A hand emerged from under it, and hung toward the ground; it was the old man's. Enjolras bent down and kissed this venerable hand, in the same way as he had done the forehead on the previous evening. They were the only two kisses he had ever given in his life.

Let us be brief. The barricade had resisted like a gate of Thebes, and the wine-shop resisted like a house of Saragossa. Such resistances are violent, and there is no quarter, and a flag of truce is impossible; people are willing to die provided that they can kill. When the assailants rushed into the wine-shop, their feet entangled in the panels of the broken door which lay on the ground, they did not find a single combatant. The winding staircase, cut away with axes, lay in the middle of the ground-floor room, a few wounded men were on the point of dying, all who were not killed were on the first floor, and a terrific fire was discharged thence through the hole in the ceiling which had been the entrance to the restaurant. These were the last cartridges, and when they were expended and nobody had any powder or balls left, each man took up two of the bottles reserved by Enjolras, and defended the stairs with these frightfully fragile weapons. They were bottles of



aqua-fortis. We describe the gloomy things of carnage exactly as they are : the besieged makes a weapon of everything. The noise was indescribable, and a compressed burning smoke almost threw night over the combat. Words fail to describe horror when it has reached this stage. It was the heroism of monsters.

At last, by employing the skeleton of the staircase, by climbing up the walls, clinging to the ceiling and killing on the very edge of the trap the last who resisted, some twenty assailants, soldiers, National and Municipal Guards, mostly disfigured by wounds in the face received in this formidable ascent, blinded by blood, furious and savage, burst into the first-floor room. There was only one man standing there—Enjolras ; without cartridges or sword, he only held in his hand the barrel of his carbine, whose butt he had broken on the heads of those who entered. He had placed the billiard-table between himself and his assailants, he had fallen back to the end of the room, and there, with flashing eye and head erect, holding the piece of a weapon in his hand, he was still sufficiently alarming for a space to be formed round him. A cry was raised.

"It is the chief ; it was he who killed the artilleryman ; as he has placed himself there, we will let him remain there. Shoot him on the spot."

"Shoot me," Enjolras said.

And, throwing away his weapon and folding his arms, he offered his chest. The boldness of dying bravely always moves men. So soon as Enjolras folded his arms, accepting the end, the din of the struggle ceased in the room, and the chaos was suddenly appeased in a species of sepulchral solemnity. It seemed as if the menacing majesty of Enjolras, disarmed and motionless, produced an effect on the tumult, and that merely by the authority of his tranquil glance, this young man, who alone was unwounded, superb, blood-stained, charming, and indifferent as if he were invulnerable, constrained this sinister mob to kill him respectfully. His beauty, heightened at this moment by his haughtiness, was dazzling, and as if he could be no more fatigued than wounded after the frightful four-and-twenty hours which had elapsed, he was fresh and rosy. It was to him that the witness referred when he said at a later date before the court-martial, "There was an insurgent whom I heard called Apollo." A National Guard who aimed at Enjolras lowered his musket, saying, "I feel as if I were going to



kill a flower." Twelve men formed into a platoon in the corner opposite to the one in which Enjolras stood, and got their muskets ready in silence. Then a sergeant shouted, "Present."

An officer interposed :

"Wait a minute."

And, addressing Enjolras :

"Do you wish to have your eyes bandaged ?"

"No."

"It was really you who killed the sergeant of artillery ?"

"Yes."

Grantaire had been awake for some minutes past. Grantaire, it will be remembered, had been sleeping since the past evening in the upper room, with his head lying on a table. He realised, in all its energy, the old metaphor, dead drunk. The hideous potion of absinthe, stout, and alcohol, had thrown him into a lethargic state, and, as his table was small, and of no use at the barricade, they had left it to him. He was still in the same posture, with his chest upon the table, his head reeling on his arms, and surrounded by glasses and bottles. He was sleeping the deadly sleep of the hybernating bear, or the filled leech. Nothing had roused him, neither the platoon fire, nor the cannon-balls, nor the canister which penetrated through the window into the room where he was, nor the prodigious noise of the assault. Still he at times responded to the cannon by a snore. He seemed to be waiting for a bullet to save him the trouble of waking ; several corpses lay around him, and, at the first glance, nothing distinguished him from these deep sleepers of death.

Noise does not waken a drunkard, but silence arouses him, and this peculiarity has been more than once observed. The fall of anything near him increased Grantaire's lethargy ; noise lulled him. The species of halt which the tumult made before Enjolras was a shock to this heavy sleep. It is the effect of a galloping coach which stops short. Grantaire started up, stretched out his arms, rubbed his eyes, looked, yawned, and understood. Intoxication wearing off resembles a curtain that is rent, and a man sees at once, and at a single glance, all that it concealed. Everything offers itself suddenly to the memory, and the drunkard, who knows nothing of what has happened during the last twenty-four hours, has scarce opened his eyes ere he understands it all.

Concealed, as he was, in a corner, and sheltered, so to speak, by the billiard-table, the soldiers, who had their eyes fixed on Enjolras, had not even perceived Grantaire, and the sergeant was preparing to repeat the order to fire when all at once they heard a powerful voice crying at their side :

"Long live the Republic ! I belong to it."

Grantaire had risen ; and the immense gleam of all the combat which he had missed appeared in the flashing glance of the transfigured drunkard. He repeated, "Long live the Republic !" crossed the room with a firm step, and placed himself before the muskets by Enjolras' side.

"Kill us both at once," he said.

And turning gently to Enjolras, he asked him :

"Do you permit it ?"

Enjolras pressed his hand with a smile, and this smile had not passed away ere the detonation took place. Enjolras, pierced by eight bullets, remained leaning against the wall, as if nailed to it ; he merely hung his head ; Grantaire was lying stark dead at his feet. A few minutes later the soldiers dislodged the last insurgents who had taken refuge at the top of the house, and were firing through a partition in the garret. They fought desperately, and threw bodies out of windows, some still alive. Two voltigeurs, who were trying to raise the smashed omnibus, were killed by two shots from the attics ; a man in a blouse rushed out of them, with a bayonet thrust in his stomach, and lay on the ground expiring. A soldier and an insurgent slipped together down the tiles of the roof, and, as they would not loosen their hold, fell into the street, holding each other in a ferocious embrace. There was a similar struggle in the cellar ; cries, shots, and a fierce clashing ; then a silence. The barricade was captured. The soldiers commenced the search of the houses round about and the pursuit of the fugitives.

Marius was indeed a prisoner—prisoner to Jean Valjean. The hand which had clutched him behind at the moment when he was falling, and of which he felt the pressure as he lost his senses, was Jean Valjean's.

Jean Valjean had taken no other part in the struggle than that of exposing himself. Had it not been for him, in the supreme moment of agony no one would have thought of the wounded. Thanks to him, who was everywhere present in the carnage like a Providence, those who fell were picked



up, carried to the ground-floor room, and had their wounds dressed, and in the intervals he repaired the barricade. But nothing that could resemble a blow, an attack, or even personal defence, could be seen with him, and he kept quiet and gave aid. However, he had only a few scratches; and the bullets had no billet for him. If suicide formed part of what he dreamed of when he came to this sepulchre, he had not been successful, but we doubt whether he thought of suicide, which is an irreligious act. Jean Valjean did not appear to see Marius in the thick of the combat, but in truth he did not take his eyes off him. When a bullet laid Marius low Jean Valjean leaped upon him with the agility of a tiger, dashed upon him as on a prey, and carried him off.

The whirlwind of the attack was at this moment so violently concentrated on Enjolras and the door of the wine-shop that no one saw Jean Vajeau, supporting the fainting Marius in his arms, cross the unpaved ground of the barricade, and disappear round the corner of Corinth. Our readers will remember this corner, which formed a sort of cape in the street, and protected a few square feet of ground from bullets and grapeshot, and from glances as well. There is thus at times in fires a room which does not burn, and in the most raging seas, beyond a promontory, or at the end of a reef, a little quiet nook. It was in this corner of the inner trapeze of the barricade that Eponine drew her last breath. Here Jean Valjean stopped, let Marius slip to the ground, leant against a wall, and looked around him.

The situation was frightful. For the instant, for two or three minutes perhaps, this piece of wall was a shelter, but how to get out of this massacre? He recalled the agony he had felt in the Rue Polonceau, eight years previously, and in what way he had succeeded in escaping; it was difficult then, but now it was impossible. He had in front of him that implacable and silent six-storeyed house, which only seemed inhabited by the dead man leaning out of his window; he had on his right the low barricade which closed the Petite Truanderie; to climb over this obstacle appeared easy, but a row of bayonet-points could be seen over the crest of the barricade; they were line troops posted beyond the barricade, and on the watch. It was evident that to cross the barricade was to meet the fire of a platoon, and that any head which appeared above the wall of paving-stones would serve as a mark for sixty muskets. He had



on his left the battlefield, and death was behind the corner of the wall.

What was he to do? a bird alone could have escaped from this place. And he must decide at once, find an expedient, and make up his mind. They were fighting a few paces from him, but fortunately all were obstinately engaged at one point, the wine-shop door; but if a single soldier had the idea of turning the house or attacking it on the flank all would be over. Jean Valjean looked at the house opposite to him, he looked at the barricade by his side, and then looked on the ground, with the violence of supreme extremity, wildly, and as if he would have liked to dig a hole with his eyes. By force of looking, something vaguely discernible in such an agony was designed, and assumed a shape at his feet, as if the eyes had the power to produce the thing demanded. He perceived a few paces from him, at the foot of the small barricade so pitilessly guarded and watched from without, and beneath a pile of paving-stones which almost concealed it, an iron grating, laid flat and flush with the ground. This grating, made of strong cross-bars, was about two feet square, and the framework of paving-stones which supported it had been torn out, and it was as it were unset. Through the bars a glimpse could be caught of an obscure opening, something like a chimney-pot or the cylinder of a cistern. Jean Valjean dashed up, and his old skill in escapes rose to his brain like a beam of light. To remove the paving-stones, tear up the grating, take Marius, who was as inert as a dead body, on his shoulders, descend with this burden on his loins, helping himself with his elbows and knees, into this sort of well, which was fortunately of no great depth, to let the grating fall again over his head, to set foot on a paved surface, about ten feet below the earth, all this was executed like something done in delirium, with a giant's strength and the rapidity of an eagle: this occupied but a few minutes. Jean Valjean found himself with the still fainting Marius in a sort of long subterranean corridor, where there was profound peace, absolute silence, and night. The impression which he had formerly felt in falling out of the street into the convent recurred to him, still what he now carried was not Cosette, but Marius.

He could now hardly hear above him, like a vague murmur, the formidable tumult of the wine-shop being taken by assault.



## CHAPTER CVI.

JEAN VALJEAN found himself in the sewer of Paris—that wonderful underground city. It was an extraordinary transition, in the very heart of the city. Jean Valjean had left the city, and in a twinkling, the time required to lift a trap and let it fall again, he had passed from broad daylight to complete darkness, from midday to midnight, from noise to silence, from the uproar of thunder to the stagnation of the tomb, and, by an incident more prodigious even than that of the Rue Polonceau, from the extremest peril to the most absolute security. A sudden fall into a cellar, disappearance in the oubliette of Paris, leaving this street where death was all around for this species of sepulchre in which was life; it was a strange moment. He stood for some minutes as if stunned, listening and amazed. The trap-door of safety had suddenly opened beneath him, and the heavenly kindness had to some extent snared him by treachery. Admirable ambushes of Providence! Still the wounded man did not stir, and Jean Valjean did not know whether what he was carrying in this fosse were alive or dead.

His first sensation was blindness, for all at once he could see nothing. He felt too that in a moment he had become deaf, for he could hear nothing more. The frenzied storm of murder maintained a few yards above him only reached him confusedly and indistinctly, and like a rumbling at a great depth. He felt that he had something solid under his feet, but that was all; still it was sufficient. He stretched out one arm, then the other; he touched the wall on both sides and understood that the passage was narrow; his foot slipped, and he understood that the pavement was damp. He advanced one foot cautiously, fearing a hole, a cesspool, or some gulf, and satisfied himself that the pavement went onwards. A fetid gust warned him of the spot where he was. At the expiration of a few minutes he was no longer blind, a little light fell through the trap by which he descended, and his eye grew used to this cellar. He began to distinguish something. The passage in which he had run to earth—no other word expresses the situation better—was walled up behind him; it was one of those blind alleys called in the special language branchments. Before him he had another wall, a wall of night. The light



of the trap expired ten or twelve feet from the spot where Jean Valjean was, and scarce produced a livid whiteness on a few yards of the damp wall of the sewer. Beyond that the opaqueness was massive, to enter it seemed horrible, and resembled being swallowed up by an earthquake. Yet it was possible to bury oneself in this wall of fog, and it must be done; and must even be done quickly. Jean Valjean thought that the grating which he had noticed in the street might also be noticed by the troops, and that all depended on chance. They might also come down into the well and search, so he had not a minute to lose. He had laid Marius on the ground, and now gathered him up—that is again the right expression—took him on his shoulders, and set out. He resolutely entered the obscurity.

The truth is, that they were not so safe as Jean Valjean supposed. Perils of another nature, but equally great, awaited them. After the flashing whirlwind of the combat came the cavern of miasmas and snares, after the chaos, the cloaca. Jean Valjean had passed from one circle of the Inferno into another. When he had gone fifty yards he was obliged to stop, for a question occurred to him; the passage ran into another, which it intersected, and two roads offered themselves. Which should he take? ought he to turn to the left or right? how was he to find his way in this black labyrinth? This labyrinth, we have said, has a clue in its slope, and following the slope leads to the river. Jean Valjean understood this immediately; he said to himself that he was probably in the sewer of the markets, that, if he turned to the left and followed the incline, he would arrive in a quarter of an hour at some opening on the Seine between the Pont au Change and the Pont Neuf, that is to say, appear in broad daylight in the busiest part of Paris. Perhaps he might come out at some street opening, and passers-by would be stupefied at seeing two bloodstained men emerge from the ground at their feet. The police would come up and they would be carried off to the nearest guardroom; they would be prisoners before they had come out. It would be better, therefore, to bury himself in the labyrinth, confine in the darkness, and leave the issue to Providence.

He went up the incline, and turned to the right; when he had gone round the corner of the gallery the distant light from the trap disappeared, the curtain of darkness fell on him again, and he became blind once more. For all



that he advanced as rapidly as he could; Marius' arms were passed round his neck, and his feet hung down behind. He held the two arms with one hand and felt the wall with the other. Marius' cheek touched his and was glued to it, as it was bloody, and he felt a warm stream which came from Marius drip on him and penetrate his clothing. Still, a warm breath in his ear, which touched the wounded man's mouth, indicated respiration, and consequently life. The passage in which Jean Valjean was now walking was not so narrow as the former, and he advanced with some difficulty. The rain of the previous night had not yet passed off, and formed a small torrent in the centre, and he was forced to hug the wall in order not to lave his feet in the water. He went on thus darkly, resembling beings of the night groping in the invisible, and subterraneously lost in the veins of gloom. Still, by degrees, either that a distant grating sent a little floating light into this opaque mist, or that his eyes grew accustomed to the obscurity, he regained some vague vision, and began to notice confusedly, at one moment the wall he was touching, at another the vault under which he was passing. The pupil is dilated at night, and eventually finds daylight in it, in the same way as the soul is dilated in misfortune and eventually finds God in it.

To direct himself was difficult, for the sewers represent, so to speak, the outline of the streets standing over them. There were in the Paris of that day two thousand two hundred streets, and imagine beneath them that forest of dark branches called the sewer. The system of drains existing at that day, if placed end on end, would have given a length of eleven leagues. Jean Valjean began by deceiving himself; he fancied that he was under the Rue St. Denis, and it was unlucky that he was not so. There is under that street an old stone drain, dating from Louis XIII., which runs straight to the collecting sewer, called the Grand Sewer, with only one turn on the right, by the old Court of Miracles, and a single branch, the St. Martin sewer, whose four arms cut each other at right angles. But the gut of the little Truanderie, whose entrance was near the Corinth wine-shop, never communicated with the sewer of the Rue St. Denis; it falls into the Montmartre drain, and that is where Jean Valjean now was.

He advanced anxiously, but calmly, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, plunged into chance, that is to say, swallowed



up in Providence. By degrees, however, we are bound to state that a certain amount of horror beset him, and the shadow which enveloped him entered his mind. He was walking in an enigma. This aqueduct of the cloaca is formidable, for it intersects itself in a vertiginous manner, and it is a mournful thing to be caught in this Paris of darkness. Jean Valjean was obliged to find and almost invent his road without seeing it. In this unknown region each step that he ventured might be his last. How was he to get out of it? would he find an issue? would he find it in time? could he pierce and penetrate this colossal subterranean sponge with its passages of stone? would he meet there some unexpected knot of darkness? would he arrive at something inextricable and impassable? would Marius die of hæmorrhage, and himself of hunger? would they both end by being lost there, and form two skeletons in a corner of this night? He did not know; he asked himself all this and could not find an answer.

He suddenly had a surprise. At the most unexpected moment, and without ceasing to walk in a straight line, he perceived that he was no longer ascending; the water of the gutter plashed against his heels instead of coming to his toes. The sewer was now descending; why? was he about to reach the Seine suddenly? That danger was great, but the peril of turning back was greater still, and he continued to advance. He was not proceeding toward the Seine; the ridge which the soil of Paris makes on the right bank empties one of its water-sheds into the Seine, and the other into the Grand Sewer. The crest of this ridge, which determines the division of the waters, follows a most capricious line; the highest point is in the St. Avoye sewer, beyond the Rue Michel-le-comte, in the Louvre sewer, near the boulevards, and in the Montmartre drain. This highest point Jean Valjean had reached, and he was proceeding toward the belt sewer, or in the right direction, but he knew it not. Each time that he reached a branch he felt the corners, and if he found the opening narrower than the passage in which he was he did not enter, but continued his march, correctly judging that any narrower way must end in a blind alley, and could only take him from his object, that is to say, an outlet. He thus avoided the fourfold snare laid for him in the darkness by the four labyrinths which we have enumerated. At a certain moment he recognised that he was getting from under that part of



Paris petrified by the riot, where the barricades had suppressed circulation, and returning under living and normal Paris. He suddenly heard above his head a sound like thunder, distant but continuous; it was the rolling of vehicles.

He had been walking about half an hour, at least that was the calculation he made, and had not thought of resting; he had merely changed the hand which held Marius up. The darkness was more profound than ever, but this darkness reassured him. All at once he saw his shadow before him; it stood out upon a faint and almost indistinct redness, which vaguely empurpled the roadway at his feet and the vault above his head, and glided along the greasy walls of the passage. He turned his head in stupefaction, and saw behind him at a distance, which appeared immense, a sort of horrible star glistening, which seemed to be looking at him. It was the gloomy police star rising in the sewer. Behind this star there moved confusedly nine or ten black, upright, indistinct, and terrible forms.

The meaning was as follows: On the day of June 6 a *battue* of the sewers was ordered, for it was feared that the conquered should fly to them as a refuge, and Prefect Gisquet ordered occult Paris to be searched, while General Bugeaud swept public Paris; a double connected operation, which required a double strategy of the public force, represented above by the army and beneath by the police. Three squads of agents and sewermen explored the subway of Paris, the first the right bank, the second the left bank, and the third the City. The agents were armed with carbines, bludgeons, swords, and daggers, and what was at this moment pointed at Jean Valjean was the lantern of the patrol of the right bank. This patrol had just inspected the winding gallery and the three blind alleys which are under the Rue du Cadran. While the police were carrying their light about there, Jean Valjean in his progress came to the entrance of the gallery, found it narrower than the main gallery, and had not entered it. The police, on coming out of the Cadran gallery, fancied that they could hear the sound of footsteps in the direction of the outer drain, and they were really Jean Valjean's footsteps. The head sergeant of the patrol raised his lantern, and the squad began peering into the mist in the direction whence the noise had come.



It was an indescribable moment for Jean Valjean; luckily, if he saw the lantern well, the lantern saw him badly, for it was the light and he was the darkness. He was far off, and blended with the blackness of the spot, so he drew himself up against the wall and stopped. However, he did not explain to himself what was moving behind him; lack of sleep, want of food, emotions, had thrown him also into the visionary state. He saw a flash, and round this flash, sprites. What was it? he did not understand. When Jean Valjean stopped, the noise ceased; the police listened and heard nothing, they looked and saw nothing, and hence consulted together. There was at that period a sort of square at this point in the Montmartre drain, called *de service*, which has since been suppressed, owing to the small internal lake which the torrents of rain formed there, and the squad assembled on this square. Jean Valjean saw them make a sort of circle, and then bulldog heads came together and whispered. The result of this council held by the watch-dogs was that they were mistaken, that there had been no noise, that there was nobody there, that it was useless to enter the belt sewer, that it would be time wasted, but that they must hasten to the St. Merry drain, for if there were anything to be done and any "boussingot" to track, it would be there. The sergeant gave orders to left-wheel toward the watershed of the Seine. Had they thought of dividing into two squads and going in both directions, Jean Valjean would have been caught. It is probable that the instructions of the Prefecture, fearing the chance of a fight with a large body of insurgents, forbade the patrol from dividing. The squad set out again, leaving Jean Valjean behind; and in all this movement he perceived nothing except the eclipse of the lantern, which was suddenly turned away.

Before starting, the sergeant, to satisfy his police conscience, discharged his carbine in the direction where Jean Valjean was. The detonation rolled echoing along the crypt, like the rumbling of these Titanic bowels. A piece of plaster which fell into the gutter and plashed up the water a few yards from Jean Valjean warned him that the bullet had struck the vault above his head. Measured and slow steps echoed for some time along the wooden causeway, growing more and more deadened by the growing distance; the group of black forms disappeared; a light oscillated and floated, forming on the vault a ruddy circle, which decreased and disappeared;



the silence again became profound, the obscurity again became complete, and blindness and deafness again took possession of the gloom. Jean Valjean, not daring yet to stir, remained leaning for a long time against the wall, with outstretched ear and dilated eyeballs, watching the vanishing of that phantom patrol.

## CHAPTER CVII.

WE must do the police of that period the justice of saying that even in the gravest public conjunctures, they imperturbably accomplished their duties as watchmen. A riot was not in their eyes a pretext to leave the bridle to malefactors and to neglect society for the reason that the Government was in danger. The ordinary duties were performed correctly in addition to the extraordinary duties, and were in no way disturbed. In the midst of an incalculable political event, under the pressure of a possible revolution, an agent, not allowing himself to be affected by the insurrection and the barricade, would track a robber. Something very like this occurred on the afternoon of June 6, on the right bank of the Seine, a little beyond the Pont des Invalides. There is no bank there at the present day, and the appearance of the spot has been altered. On this slope two men, a certain distance apart, were observing each other; the one in front seemed to be trying to get away, while the one behind wanted to catch him up. It was like a game of chess played at a distance and silently; neither of them seemed to be in a hurry, and both walked slowly, as if they were afraid that increased speed on the part of one would be imitated by the other. It might have been called an appetite following a prey, without appearing to do so purposely; the prey was crafty, and kept on guard.

The proportions required between the tracked ferret and the tracking dog were observed. The one trying to escape was thin and weak; the one trying to catch was a tall fellow, and evidently a rough customer. The first, feeling himself the weaker, avoided the second, but did so in a deeply furious way; any one who could have observed him would have seen in his eyes the gloomy hostility of flight, and all the threat which there is in fear; the slope was deserted, there were no passers-by, not even a boat.

man or raftsmen in the boats moored here and there. They could only be noticed easily from the opposite quay, and any one who had watched them at that distance, would have seen that the man in front appeared a bristling, ragged, and shambling fellow, anxious and shivering under a torn blouse, while the other was a classic and official personage, wearing the frock-coat of authority buttoned up to the chin. The reader would probably recognise these two men, were he to see them more closely. What was the object of the last one? probably he wished to clothe the other man more warmly. When a man dressed by the State pursues a man in rags, it is in order to make of him also a man dressed by the State. The difference of colour is the sole question,—to be dressed in blue is glorious, to be dressed in red is disagreeable, for there is a purple of the lower classes. It was probably some disagreeable thing, and some purple of this sort, which the first man desired to avoid.

If the other allowed him to go on ahead, and did not yet arrest him, it was, in all appearance, in the hope of seeing him arrive at some significative rendezvous and some group worth capturing. This delicate operation is called tracking. What renders this conjecture highly probable, is the fact that the buttoned-up man perceiving from the slope an empty fiacre passing, made a sign to the driver; the driver understood, evidently perceived with whom he had to deal, turned round, and began following the two men along the quay. This was not perceived by the ragged, shambling fellow in front. The hackney-coach rolled along under the trees of the Champs Elysées, and over the parapet could be seen the bust of the driver, whip in hand. One of the secret instructions of the police to the agents is "always have a hackney-coach at hand in case of need." While each of these men manœuvred with irreproachable strategy, they approached an incline in the quay, which allowed drivers coming from Passy to water their horses in the river. This incline has since been suppressed for the sake of symmetry,—horses die of thirst, but the eye is flattered. It was probable that the man in the blouse would ascend by this incline in order to try and escape in the Champs Elysées, a place adorned with trees, but, to make up for that, much frequented by police agents, where the other could easily procure assistance. This point of the quay is a very little distance from the house



brought from Moret to Paris in 1824, by Colonel Brack, and called the house of Francis I. A piquet is always stationed there. To the great surprise of his watcher, the tracked man did not turn up the road to the watering-place, but continued to advance along the bank parallel with the quay. His position was evidently becoming critical, for unless he threw himself into the Seine, what could he do?

There were no means now left him of returning to the quay, no incline or no steps, and they were close to the spot marked by the turn in the Seine, near the Pont de Jena, where the bank, gradually contracting, ended in a narrow strip, and was lost in the water. There he must inevitably find himself blockaded between the tall wall on his right, the river on his left and facing him, and authority at his heels. It is true that this termination of the bank was masked from sight by a pile of rubbish seven feet high, the result of some demolition. But did this man hope to conceal himself profitably behind this heap? the expedient would have been puerile. He evidently did not dream of that, for the innocence of robbers does not go so far. The pile of rubbish formed on the waterside a sort of eminence extending in a promontory to the quay wall; the pursued man reached this small mound and went round it, so that he was no longer seen by the other. The latter, not seeing, was not seen, and he took advantage of this to give up all dissimulation and walk very fast. In a few minutes he reached the heap and turned it, but there stood stupefied. The man he was pursuing was not there, it was a total eclipse of the man in the blouse. The bank did not run more than thirty yards beyond the heap, and then plunged under the water which washed the quay wall. The fugitive could not have thrown himself into the Seine, or have climbed up the quay wall, without being seen by his pursuer. What had become of him?

The man in the buttoned-up coat walked to the end of the bank and stood there for a moment, thoughtfully, with clenched fists and scowling eye. All at once he smote his forehead; he had just perceived, at the point where the ground ended and the water began, a wide, low, arched, iron grating, provided with a heavy lock, and three massive hinges. This grating, a sort of gate pierced at the bottom of the quay, opened on the river as much as on the bank, and a black stream poured from under it into the Seine,

Beyond the heavy rusty bars could be distinguished a sort of arched and dark passage. The man folded his arms and looked at the grating reproachfully, and this look not being sufficient, he tried to push it open, he shook it, but it offered a sturdy resistance. It was probable that it had just been opened, although no sound had been heard, a singular thing with so rusty a gate, but it was certain that it had been closed again. This indicated that the man who had opened the gate had not a pick-lock but a key. This evidence at once burst on the mind of the man who was trying to open the grating, and drew from him this indignant apostrophe :

"That is strong ! a government key !"

This said, hoping we know not what, either to see the man come out or others enter, he posted himself on the watch behind the heap of rubbish, with the patient rage of a yard-mastiff.

## CHAPTER CVIII.

JEAN VALJEAN had resumed his advance, and had not stopped again. This march grew more and more laborious ; for the level of these arches varies ; the average height is about five feet six inches, and was calculated for a man's stature. Jean Valjean was compelled to stoop so as not to dash Marius against the roof, and was forced at each moment to bend down, then draw himself up and incessantly feel the wall. The dampness of the stones and of the flooring rendered them bad supports either for the hand or the foot, and he tottered in the hideous dungheap of the city. The intermittent flashes of the street gratings only appeared at lengthened intervals, and were so faint that the bright sunshine seemed to be moonlight ; all the rest was fog, miasma, opaqueness, and blackness. Jean Valjean was hungry and thirsty ; thirsty especially ; and this place, like the sea, is one full of water where you cannot drink. His strength, which, as we know, was prodigious, and but slightly diminished by age, owing to his chaste and sober life, was, however, beginning to give way ; fatigue assailed him, and his decreasing strength increased the weight of his burden. Marius, who was perhaps dead, was heavy, like all inert bodies, but Jean Valjean held him in such a way that his chest was not compressed, and his breathing could always be as free as possible. He felt between his



legs the rapid gliding of rats, and one was so startled as to bite him. From time to time a gush of fresh air came through the gratings, and this revived him.

It might be about 3 p.m. when he reached the belt sewer, and was at first amazed by the sudden widening. He unexpectedly found himself in a gallery whose two walls his outstretched arms did not reach, and under an arch which his head did not touch. The Grand Sewer, in fact, is eight feet wide and seven high. At the point where the Montmartre drain joins the Grand Sewer, two other subterranean galleries, that of the Rue de Provence and that of the Abattoir, form cross-roads. Between these four ways a less sagacious man would have been undecided, but Jean Valjean selected the widest, that is to say, the belt sewer. But here the question came back again,—should he ascend or descend? He thought that the situation was pressing, and that he must at all risks now reach the Seine, in other words, descend, so he turned to the left. It was fortunate that he did so. If Jean Valjean had remounted the gallery he would have arrived, exhausted by fatigue and dying, at a wall. He would have been lost.

Strictly speaking, by going back a little way, entering the passage of the Filles du Calvaire, he might have reached the Amelot sewer, and then if he did not lose his way in the species of F which is under the Bastille, he would have reached the issue on the Seine near the Arsenal. But for that he must have thoroughly known, in all its ramifications and piercings, the enormous madrepore of the sewer. Now we dwell on the fact that he knew nothing of this frightful labyrinth in which he was marching, and had he been asked where he was he would have replied,—In the night. His instinct served him well; going down, in fact, was the only salvation possible. He left on his right the two passages which ramify in the shape of a claw under the Rues Lafitte and St. Georges, and the long forked corridor of the Chaussée d'Antin. A little beyond an affluent, which was probably the Madeleine branch, he stopped, for he was very weary. A large grating, probably the one in the Rue d'Anjou, produced an almost bright light. Jean Valjean, with the gentle movements which a brother would bestow on his wounded brother, laid Marius upon the side bank of the drain, and his white face gleamed under the white light of the trap as from the bottom of a tomb. His eyes were closed, his hair was attached to his forehead like pincers



dried in blood, his hands were hanging and dead, his limbs cold, and blood was clotted at the corner of his lip. Coagulated blood had collected in his cravat knot, his shirt entered the wounds, and the cloth of his coat rubbed the gaping edges of the quivering flesh. Jean Valjean, removing the clothes with the tips of his fingers, laid his hand on his chest,—the heart still beat. Jean Valjean tore up his shirt, bandaged the wounds as well as he could, and stopped the blood that was flowing; then, stooping down in this half daylight over Marius, who was still unconscious and almost breathless, he looked at him with indescribable hatred. In moving Marius' clothes he had found in his pockets two things, the loaf, which he had forgotten the previous evening, and his pocket-book. He ate the bread and opened the pocket-book. On the first page he read the lines written by Marius, as will be remembered :

"My name is Marius Pontmercy, carry my body to my grandfather's, M. Gillenormand, No. 6 Rue des Filles du Calvaire, in the Marais."

Jean Valjean read by the light of the grating these lines, and remained for a time as it were absorbed in himself, and repeating in a low voice, M. Gillenormand, No. 6 Rue des Filles du Calvaire. He returned the portfolio to Marius' pocket; he had eaten, and his strength had come back to him. He raised Marius again, carefully laid his head on his right shoulder, and began descending the sewer. The Grand Sewer, running along the course of the valley of Menilmontant, is nearly two leagues in length, and is paved for a considerable portion of the distance. This nominal torch of the streets of Paris, with which we enlighten for the reader Jean Valjean's subterranean march, he did not possess. Nothing informed him what zone of the city he was traversing, nor what distance he had gone; still, the growing paleness of the flakes of light which he met from time to time indicated to him that the sun was retiring from the pavement, and that day would be soon ended, and the rolling of vehicles over his head, which had become intermittent instead of continuous, then having almost ceased, proved to him that he was no longer under central Paris, and that he was approaching some solitary region, near the external boulevards or the most distant quays, where there are fewer houses and streets, and the drain has fewer gratings.



The obscurity thickened around Jean Valjean; still he continued to advance, groping his way in the obscurity.

This obscurity suddenly became terrible.

He felt that he was entering the water, and that he had under his feet, pavement no longer, but mud. It often happens on certain coasts of Brittany or Scotland that a man, whether traveller or fisherman, walking at low water on the sands some distance from the coast, suddenly perceives that during the last few minutes he has found some difficulty in walking. The shore beneath his feet is like pitch, his heels are attached to it, it is no longer sand, but bird-lime; the sand is perfectly dry, but at every step taken, so soon as the foot is raised the imprint it leaves fills with water. The eye, however, has perceived no change, the immense expanse is smooth and calm, all the sand seems alike, nothing distinguishes the soil which is solid from that which is no longer so, and the little merry swarm of water-fleas continue to leap tumultuously round the feet of the wayfarer. The man follows his road, turns toward the land, and tries to approach the coast, not that he is alarmed; alarmed at what? Still he feels as if the heaviness of his feet increased at every step that he takes; all at once he sinks in, sinks in two or three inches. He is decidedly not on the right road, and he stops to look about him. Suddenly he looks at his feet, but they have disappeared, the sand covers them. He draws his feet out of the sand and tries to turn back, but he sinks in deeper still. The sand comes up to his ankles, he pulls himself out and turns to his left, when the sand comes to his knees, he turns to the right, and the sand comes up to his thighs, then he recognises with indescribable terror that he is caught in a quicksand, and has under him the frightful medium in which a man can no more walk than a fish can swim. At times the rider is swallowed up with his horse, at times the carter with his cart; it is a shipwreck elsewhere than in the water, it is the land drowning man. The land penetrated by the ocean becomes a snare. It presents itself as a plain, and opens like a wave.

Such a mournful adventure, always possible on some seashore, was also possible some thirty years ago in the sewer of Paris. Before the important works began in 1833 the subway of Paris was subject to sudden breakings in. The water filtered through a subjacent and peculiarly friable



soil ; and the roadway, if made of paving-stones, as in the old drains, or of concrete upon beton, as in the new galleries, having no support, bent. A bend in a planking of this nature is a crevice, and a crevice is a bursting in. The roadway broke away for a certain length, and such a gap, a gulf of mud, was called in the special language *fontis*. What is a *fontis*? it is the quicksand of the seashore suddenly met with underground ; it is the quicksand of St. Michel in a sewer. The moistened soil is in a state of fusion, all its particles are held in suspense in a shifting medium ; it is not land and it is not water. The depth is at times very great. Nothing can be more formidable than meeting with such a thing ; if water predominate death is quick, for a man is drowned ; if earth predominate, death is slow, for he is sucked down.

Can our readers imagine such a death ? if it be frightful to sink in a quicksand on the seashore, what is it in a cloaca ? instead of fresh air, daylight, a clear horizon, vast sounds, the free clouds from which life rains, the barque perceived in the distance, that hope under every form, of possible passers-by, of possible help up to the last minute,—instead of all this, deafness, blindness, a black archway, the interior of a tomb already made, death in the mud under a tombstone ! slow asphyxia by uncleanness, a sarcophagus where asphyxia opens its claws in the filth, and clutches you by the throat ; fetidness mingled with the death-rattle, mud instead of the sand, sulphuretted hydrogen in lieu of the hurricane, ordure instead of the ocean ! and to call and gnash the teeth, and writhe, and struggle and expire, with this enormous city which knows nothing of it above one's head. Inexpressible the horror of dying thus !

The depth of the *fontis* varied, as did their length and density, according to the nature of the subsoil. At times a *fontis* was three or four feet deep, at times eight or ten, and sometimes it was bottomless. In one the mud was almost solid, in another nearly liquid. The mud bears more or less well according to its degree of density, and a lad escapes where a man is lost. The first law of safety is to throw away every sort of loading, and every sewer-man who felt the ground giving way under him began by getting rid of his basket of tools. The *fontis* had various causes, friability of soil, some convulsion beyond man's depth, violent summer showers, the incessant winter rain, and long fine rains.



Jean Valjean found himself in presence of a fontis.

A giving way of the pavement, which was badly supported by the subjacent sand, had produced a deposit of rain water, and when the filtering had taken place, the ground broke in, and the roadway, being dislocated, fell into the mud. How far? it was impossible to say, for the darkness was denser there than anywhere else; it was a slough of mud in a cavern of night. Jean Valjean felt the 'pavement depart from under him as he entered the slough; there was water at top and mud underneath. He must pass it, for it was impossible to turn back; Marius was dying, and Jean Valjean worn out. Where else could he go? Jean Valjean advanced; the slough appeared but of slight depth at the first few steps, but as he advanced his legs sank in. He soon had mud up to the middle of his legs, and water above his knees. He walked along, raising Marius with both arms as high as he could above the surface of the water; the mud now came up to his knees and the water to his waist. He could no longer draw back, and he sank in deeper and deeper. This mud, dense enough for the weight of one man, could not evidently bear two; Marius and Jean Valjean might have had a chance of getting out separately, but, for all that, Jean Valjean continued to advance, bearing the dying man, who was perhaps a corpse. The water came up to his armpits, and he felt himself drowning; he could scarce move in the depth of mud in which he was standing, for the density which was the support was also the obstacle. He still kept Marius up, and advanced with an extraordinary expenditure of strength, but he was sinking. He had only his head out of water and his two arms sustaining Marius. In the old paintings of the Deluge there is a mother holding her child in the same way. As he still sank he threw back his face to escape the water and be able to breathe; any one who saw him in this darkness would have fancied he saw a mask floating on the gloomy waters; he vaguely perceived above him Marius' hanging head and livid face; he made a desperate effort, and advanced his foot, which struck against something solid, a resting-place. It was high time.

He drew himself up, and writhed, and rooted himself with a species of fury upon this support. It produced on him the effect of the first step of a staircase reascending to life. This support, met with in the mud, at the supreme moment, was the beginning of the other side of the roadway, which had



fallen in without breaking, and had bent under the water like a plank, and in a single piece. A well-constructed pavement forms a curve, and possesses such firmness. This fragment of roadway, partly submerged, but solid, was a real incline, and once upon it they were saved. Jean Valjean ascended it, and attained the other side of the slough. On leaving the water his foot caught against a stone and he fell on his knees. He found that this was just, and remained on them for some time, with his soul absorbed in words addressed to God. He rose, shivering, chilled, bent beneath the dying man he carried, dripping with filth, but with his soul full of a strange light.

He resumed his route once more. However, if he had not left his life in the fontis, he seemed to have left his strength there. This supreme effort had exhausted him, and his fatigue was now so great that he was obliged to rest every three or four paces, to take breath, and lean against the wall. Once he was obliged to sit down on the curb in order to alter Marius' position, and believed that he should remain there. But if his vigour were dead his energy was not so, and he rose again. He walked desperately, almost quickly, went thus one hundred yards without raising his head, almost without breathing, and all at once ran against the wall. He had reached an elbow of the drain, and, on arriving head down at the turning, had come against the wall. He raised his eyes, and at the end of the passage down there, far, very far away, perceived a light. But this time it was no terrible light, but white, fair light. It was daylight. Jean Valjean saw the outlet. A condemned soul that suddenly saw from the middle of the furnace the issue from Gehenna would feel what Jean Valjean felt. It would fly wildly with the stumps of its burnt wings toward the radiant gate. Jean Valjean no longer felt fatigue, he no longer felt Marius' weight, he found again his muscles of steel, and ran rather than walked. As he drew nearer, the outlet became more distinctly designed; it was an arch, not so tall as the roof, which gradually contracted, and not so wide as the gallery, which grew narrower at the same time as the roof became lowered. The tunnel finished on the inside in the shape of a funnel, a faulty reduction, imitated from the wickets of houses of correction, logical in a prison, but illogical in a drain, and which has since been corrected.

Jean Valjean reached the issue and then stopped; it was



certainly the outlet, but they could not get out. The arch was closed by a strong grating, and this grating, which apparently rarely turned on its oxidised hinges, was fastened to the stone wall by a heavy lock, which, red with rust, seemed an enormous brick. The keyhole was visible, as well as the bolt deeply plunged into its iron box. It was one of these Bastille locks of which ancient Paris was so prodigal. Beyond the grating were the open air, the river, daylight, the bank, very narrow, but sufficient to depart, the distant quays, Paris, that gulf in which a man hides himself so easily, the wide horizon, and liberty. On the right could be distinguished, down the river, the Pont de Jena, and up it the Pont des Invalides; the spot would have been a favourable one to await night and escape. It was one of the most solitary points in Paris, the bank facing the Gros Caillou. The flies went in and out through the grating bars. It might be about half-past eight in the evening, and day was drawing in: Jean Valjean laid Marius along the wall on the dry part of the way, then walked up to the grating and seized the bars with both hands; the shock was frenzied, but the effect *nil*. The grating did not stir. Jean Valjean seized the bars one after the other, hoping he might be able to break out the least substantial one, and employ it as a lever to lift the gate off the hinges, or break the lock, but not a bar stirred. A tiger's teeth are not more solidly set in their jaws. Without a lever it was impossible to open the grating, and the obstacle was invincible.

Must he finish, then, there? what should he do? what would become of him? he had not the strength to turn back and recommence the frightful journey which he had already made. Moreover, how was he to cross again that slough from which he had only escaped by a miracle? And after the slough, was there not the police squad, which he assuredly would not escape twice; and then where should he go, and what direction take? following the slope would not lead to his object, for if he reached another outlet, he would find it obstructed by an iron plate or a grating. All the issues were indubitably closed in that way; accident had left the grating by which they had entered open, but it was plain that all the other mouths of the sewer were closed. They had only succeeded in escaping into a prison.

It was all over, and all that Jean Valjean had done was useless: God opposed it. They were both caught in the



"It was certainly the outlet, but they could  
not get out."





dark and immense web of death, and Jean Valjean felt the fearful spider already running along the black threads in the darkness. He turned his back to the grating and fell on the pavement near Marius, who was still motionless, and whose head had fallen between his knees. There was no outlet, that was the last drop of agony. Of whom did he think in this profound despondency? Neither of himself nor of Marius! of Cosette. In the midst of his annihilation a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a low voice said:

“Half shares.”

Some one in this shadow? As nothing so resembles a dream as despair, Jean Valjean fancied that he was dreaming. He had not heard a footstep. Was it possible? He raised his eyes; a man was standing before him. This man was dressed in a blouse, his feet were naked, and he held his shoes in his hand; he had evidently taken them off in order to be able to reach Jean Valjean without letting his footsteps be heard. Jean Valjean had not a moment's hesitation: however unexpected the meeting might be, the man was known to him: it was Thénardier. Although, so to speak, aroused with a start, Jean Valjean, accustomed to alarms and to unexpected blows, which it is necessary to parry quickly, at once regained possession of all his presence of mind. Besides, the situation could not be worse, a certain degree of distress is no longer capable of crescendo, and Thénardier himself could not add any blackness to this night. There was a moment's expectation. Thénardier, raising his right hand to the level of his forehead, made a screen of it; then he drew his eyebrows together with a wink, which, with a slight pinching of the lips, characterises the sagacious attention of a man who is striving to recognise another. He did not succeed. Jean Valjean, as we said, was turning his back to the light, and was besides so disfigured, so filthy, and so bloodstained, that he could not have been recognised in broad daylight. On the other hand, Thénardier, with his face lit up by the light from the grating, a cellar brightness, it is true, livid but precise in its lividness, struck Jean Valjean at once, to employ the energetic popular metaphor. This inequality of conditions sufficed to ensure some advantage to Jean Valjean in the mysterious duel which was about to begin between the two situations and the two men. The meeting took place between Jean Valjean masked and Thénardier unmasked. Jean Valjean at once perceived that Thénardier did not recognise him; and they looked at each



other silently in this gloom, as if taking each other's measure. Thénardier was the first to break the silence.

"How do you mean to get out?"

Jean Valjean not replying, Thénardier continued:

"It is impossible to pick the lock: and yet you must get out of here."

"That is true," said Jean Valjean.

"Well, then, half shares."

"What do you mean?"

"You have killed the man; very good. I have the key."

Thénardier pointed to Marius, and continued,— "I do not know you, but you must be a friend, and I wish to help you."

Jean Valjean began to understand. Thénardier took him for an assassin. The latter continued:

"Listen, mate, you did not kill this man without looking to see what he had in his pockets. Give me my half and I open the gate."

And half drawing a heavy key from under his ragged blouse, he added:

"Would you like to see how the key is made? look here."

Jean Valjean was so astounded that he doubted whether what he saw was real. It was Providence appearing in a horrible form, and the good angel issuing from the ground in the shape of Thénardier. The latter thrust his hand into a wide pocket hidden under his blouse, drew out a rope, and handed it to Jean Valjean.

"There," he said, "I give you the rope into the bargain."

"What am I to do with the rope?"

"You also want a stone, but you will find that outside, as there is a heap of them."

"What am I to do with a stone?"

"Why, you ass, as you are going to throw the cove into the river you want a rope and a stone, or else the body will float on the water."

Jean Valjean took the rope mechanically, and Thénardier snapped his fingers as if a sudden idea had occurred to him.

"Hilloh, mate, how did you manage to get through that slough? I did not dare venture into it. Peuh! you do not smell pleasant."

After a pause he added:

"I ask you questions, but you are right not to answer: this is an apprenticeship for the magistrate's ugly quarter of an hour. And then, by not speaking at all a man runs no risk of speaking too loud. No matter, though I cannot

see your face and do not know your name, you would do wrong in supposing that I do not know who you are and what you want. I know all about it: you have smashed that swell a little, and now want to get rid of him somewhere. You prefer the river, that great nonsense-hider, and I will help you out of the hobble. It is my delight to aid a good fellow when in trouble."

While commending Jean Valjean for his silence it was plain that he was trying to make him speak. He pushed his shoulder, so as to be able to see his profile, and exclaimed, though without raising the pitch of his voice:

"Talking of the slough, you are a precious ass. Why did you not throw the man into it?"

Jean Valjean preserved silence. Thénardier continued, raising his rag of a cravat to the Adam's apple, a gesture which completes the capable air of a serious man.

"Really, you may have acted sensibly, for the workmen, when they come to-morrow to stop up the hole, would certainly have found the swell, and your trail would be followed up. Some one has passed through the sewer; who? how did he get out? was he seen to do so? The police are full of sense: the drain is a traitor, and denounces you. Such a find is a rarity, it attracts attention, for few people employ the sewer for their little business, while the river belongs to everybody, and is the real grave. At the end of a month your man is fished up at the nets of St. Cloud: well, who troubles himself about that? it's cold meat, that's all. Who killed the man? Paris, and justice makes no inquiries. You acted wisely."

The more loquacious Thénardier became, the more silent Jean Valjean was. Thénardier shook his shoulder again.

"And now let's settle our business. You have seen my key, so show me your money."

Thénardier was haggard, firm, slightly menacing, but remarkably friendly. There was one strange fact: Thénardier's manner was not simple; he did not appear entirely at his ease: while not affecting any mysterious air, he spoke in a low voice. From time to time he laid his finger on his lip, and muttered "Chut!" it was difficult to guess why, for there were only themselves present. Jean Valjean thought that other bandits were probably hidden in some corner no great distance off, and that Thénardier was not anxious to share with them. The latter continued:

"Now for a finish. How much had the swell about him?"



Jean Valjean felt in his pockets. It was, as will be remembered, always his rule to have money about him, for the gloomy life of expedients to which he was condemned rendered it a law for him. This time, however, he was unprovided. In putting on his National Guard uniform, he had forgotten upon the previous evening, mournfully absorbed as he was, to take out his pocket-book, and he had only some change in his waistcoat-pocket. He turned out his pocket, which was saturated with slime, and laid on the curb a louis d'or, two five-franc pieces, and five or six double sous. Thénardier thrust out his lower lip with a significant twist of the neck.

"You did not kill him for much," he said.

He began most familiarly feeling in Jean Valjean's and Marius' pockets, and Jean Valjean, who was most anxious to keep his back to the light, allowed him to do so. While feeling in Marius' coat, Thénardier, with the dexterity of a conjuror, managed to tear off, without Jean Valjean perceiving the fact, a strip, which he concealed under his blouse; probably thinking that this piece of cloth might help him to recognise hereafter the assassinated man and the assassin. However, he found no more than the thirty francs.

"It is true," he said. "both together, you have no more than that."

And forgetting his phrase half shares, he took all. He hesitated a little at the double sous, but on reflection he took them too, while grumbling, "I don't care, it is killing people too cheaply."

This done, he again took the key from under his blouse.

"Now, my friend, you must be off. It is here as at the fairs; you pay when you go out. You have paid, so you can go."

And he began laughing. We may be permitted to doubt whether he had the pure and disinterested intention of saving an assassin, when he gave a stranger the help of this key, and allowed any one but himself to pass through this gate. Thénardier helped Jean Valjean to replace Marius on his back, and then proceeded to the grating on the tips of his naked feet. After making Jean Valjean a sign to follow him, he placed his finger on his lip, and remained for some seconds as if in suspense; but when the inspection was over he put the key in the lock. The bolt slid, and the gate turned on its hinges without either grinding or creaking. It was plain that this grating and

these hinges, carefully oiled, opened more frequently than might be supposed. This gentleness was ill-omened; it spoke of furtive comings and goings, of the mysterious entrances and exits of the men of the night, and the crafty footfall of crime. The sewer was evidently an accomplice of some dark band, and this taciturn grating was a receiver. Thénardier held the door ajar, left just room for Jean Valjean to pass, relocked the gate, and plunged back into the darkness, making no more noise than a breath; he seemed to walk with the velvety pads of a tiger. A moment later this hideous providence had disappeared, and Jean Valjean was outside.

## CHAPTER CIX.

HE let Marius slip down on to the bank. They were outside; the miasmas, the darkness, the horror, were behind him; the healthy, pure, living, joyous, freely respirable air inundated him. All around him was silence, but it was the charming silence of the sun setting in the full azure. Jean Valjean could not refrain from contemplating the vast clear shadow which he had above him, and pensively took a bath of ecstasy and prayer in the majestic silence of the eternal heavens. Then, as if the feeling of duty returned to him, he eagerly bent down over Marius, and lifting some water in the hollow of his hand, softly threw a few drops into his face. Marius' eyelids did not move, but he still breathed through his parted lips. Jean Valjean was again about to plunge his hand into the river, when he suddenly felt some annoyance, as when we feel there is some one behind us though we cannot see him. He turned round, and there was really some one behind him, as there had been just before.

A man of tall stature, dressed in a long coat, with folded arms, and carrying in his right hand a cudgel, whose leaden knob could be seen, was standing a few paces behind Jean Valjean, who was leaning over Marius. It was with the help of the darkness a species of apparition; a simple man would have been frightened at it owing to the twilight, and a thoughtful one on account of the bludgeon. Jean Valjean recognised Javert. The reader has doubtless guessed that the tracker of Thénardier was no other than Javert. Javert, after his unhopèd-for escape from the



barricade, went to the Prefecture of Police, made a verbal report to the prefect in person in a short audience, and then immediately returned to duty, which implied—the note found on him will be remembered—a certain surveillance of the right bank of the river at the Champs Elysées, which had for some time past attracted the attention of the police. There he perceived Thénardier and followed him. The rest is known.

It will be also understood that the grating so obligingly opened for Jean Valjean was a clever trick on the part of Thénardier. He felt that Javert was still there; the watched man has a scent which never deceives him; and it was necessary to throw a bone to this greyhound. An assassin, what a chance! he could not let it slip. Thénardier, on putting Jean Valjean outside in his place, offered a prey to the policeman, made him loose his hold, caused himself to be forgotten in a greater adventure, recompensed Javert for his loss of time, which always flatters a spy, gained thirty francs, and fully intended for his own part to escape by the help of this diversion.

Jean Valjean had passed from one rock to another; these two meetings one upon the other, falling from Thénardier upon Javert, were rude. Javert did not recognise Jean Valjean, who, as we have said, no longer resembled himself. He did not unfold his arms, but secured his grasp of his bludgeon by an imperceptible movement, and said, in a sharp, calm voice:

“Who are you?”

“Myself.”

“What do you mean?”

“I am Jean Valjean.”

Javert placed his cudgel between his teeth, bent his knees, bowed his back, laid his two powerful hands on Jean Valjean's shoulders, which they held as in two vices, examined, and recognised him. Their faces almost touched, and Javert's glance was terrific. Jean Valjean remained inert under Javert's grip, like a lion enduring the claw of a lynx.

“Inspector Javert,” he said, “you have me. Besides, since this morning I have considered myself your prisoner. I did not give you my address in order to try and escape you. Take me. Only grant me one thing.”

Javert did not seem to hear, but kept his eyeballs fixed on Jean Valjean. His wrinkled chin thrust up his lips toward

his nose, a sign of stern reverie. At length he loosed his hold of Jean Valjean, drew himself up, clutched his cudgel, and, as if in a dream, muttered rather than asked this question :

"What are you doing here? and who is that man?"

Jean Valjean replied, and the sound of his voice seemed to awaken Javert :

"It is of him that I wished to speak. Do with me as you please, but help me first to carry him home. I only ask this of you."

Javert's face was contracted in the same way as it always was when any one believed him capable of a concession; still he did not say no. He stopped again, took from his pocket a handkerchief, which he dipped in the water, and wiped Marius' bloodstained forehead.

"This man was at the barricade," he said in a low voice, and as if speaking to himself; "he was the one whom they called Marius."

He was a first-class spy, who had observed everything, listened to everything, heard everything, and picked up everything when he believed himself a dead man; who even spied in his death-agony, and, standing on the first step of the sepulchre, took notes. He seized Marius' hand, and felt his pulse.

"He is wounded," said Jean Valjean.

"He is a dead man," said Javert.

Jean Valjean replied :

"No; not yet."

"Then you brought him from the barricade here?" Javert observed.

His preoccupation must have been great for him not to dwell on this alarming escape through the sewers, and not even notice Jean Valjean's silence after his question. Jean Valjean, on his side, seemed to have a sole thought; he continued :

"He lives in the Marais, in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, with his grandfather. I forget the name."

Jean Valjean felt in Marius' pocket, took out the pocket-book, opened it at the page on which Marius had written in pencil, and offered it to Javert. There was still sufficient floating light in the air to be able to read, and Javert, besides, had in his eyes the feline phosphorescence of night-birds. He deciphered the few lines written by Marius, and growled, "Gillenormand, No. 6 Rue des Filles du Calvaire." Then he cried, "Driver!"



Our readers will remember the coachman waiting above in case of need. A moment after the hackney-coach, which came down the incline leading to the watering-place, was on the bank. Marius was deposited on the back seat, and Javert sat down by Jean Valjean's side on the front one. When the door was closed the fiacre started off rapidly along the quays in the direction of the Bastille. They quitted the quay and turned into the streets; and the driver, a black outline on his seat, lashed his lean horses. There was an icy silence in the hackney-coach. Marius motionless, with his body reclining in one corner, his head on his chest, his arms pendent, and his legs stiff, appeared to be only waiting for a coffin; Jean Valjean seemed made of gloom, and Javert of stone; and in this fiacre full of night, whose interior, each time that it passed a lamp, seemed to be lividly lit up as if by an intermittent flash, accident united and appeared to confront the three tragic immobilities—the corpse, the spectre, and the statue.

At every jolt over the pavement a drop of blood fell from Marius' hair. It was quite night when the hackney-coach reached No. 6 Rue des Filles du Calvaire. Javert got out first, examined at a glance the number over the gateway, and raising the heavy knocker of hammered steel, stamped in the old style with a goat and a satyr contending, gave a violent knock. The folding-door opened slightly, and Javert pushed it open. The porter half showed himself, yawning, and scarce awake, candle in hand. All were asleep in the house, for people go to bed early in the Marais, especially on days of rioting. This good old district, terrified by the Revolution, takes refuge in sleep, like children who, when they hear Bugaboo coming, quickly hide their heads under the counterpane. In the meanwhile Jean Valjean and the driver removed Marius from the hackney-coach, Valjean holding him under the armpits and the coachman under the knees. While carrying Marius in this way Jean Valjean passed his hands under his clothes, which were terribly torn, felt his chest, and assured himself that his heart still beat. It even beat a little less feebly, as if the motion of the vehicle had produced a certain return of life. Javert addressed the porter in the tone which becomes the government in the presence of the porter of a factious man.

"Any one live here of the name of Gillenormand?"

"It is here. What do you want with him?"

"We have brought home his son."

"His son?" the porter asked in amazement.

"He is dead."

Jean Valjean, who came ragged and filthy behind Javert, and whom the porter regarded with some horror, made him a sign that it was not so. The porter seemed neither to understand Javert's remark nor Jean Valjean's nod. Javert continued :

"He has been to the barricade, and here he is."

"To the barricade!" the porter exclaimed.

"He has been killed. Go and wake his father."

The porter did not stir.

"Be off!" Javert continued, and added, "There will be a funeral here to-morrow."

The porter limited himself to awaking Basque. Basque awoke Nicolette; Nicolette awoke Aunt Gillenormand. As for the grandfather he was left to sleep, as it was thought that he would know the affair quite soon enough as it was. Marius was carried to the first floor, no one being acquainted with the fact in the rest of the house, and he was laid on an old sofa in M. Gillenormand's anteroom, and, while Basque went to fetch a physician and Nicolette opened the linen-presses, Jean Valjean felt Javert touch his shoulder. He understood, and went down, Javert following close at his heels. The porter saw them depart, as he had seen them arrive, with a startled sleepiness. They got into the hackney-coach again, and the driver mounted upon his box.

"Inspector Javert," Jean Valjean said, "grant me one thing more."

"What is it?" Javert answered roughly.

"Let me go home for a moment, and you can then do with me what you please."

Javert remained silent for a few moments with his chin thrust into the collar of his greatcoat, and then let down the front window.

"Driver," he said, "No. 7 Rue de l'Homme Armé."

They did not speak during the entire ride. What did Jean Valjean want? to finish what he had begun; to warn Cosette, tell her where Marius was, give her perhaps some other useful information, and make, if he could, certain final arrangements. For his own part, as regarded what concerned him personally, it was all over; he had been arrested by Javert, and did not resist. Any other than he, in such a situation, would perhaps have vaguely thought of the rope which Thénardier had given him, and the bars of



the first cell he entered ; but since his meeting with the Bishop, Jean Valjean had within him a profound religious hesitation against every assault, even on himself. Suicide, that mysterious attack on the unknown, which may contain to a certain extent the death of the soul, was impossible to Jean Valjean.

On entering the Rue de l'Homme Armé the coach stopped, as the street was too narrow for vehicles to pass along it. Jean Valjean and Javert got out. The driver humbly represented to "Mr. Inspector" that the Utrecht velvet of his coach was quite spoilt by the blood of the assassinated man and the filth of the assassin—that is how he understood the affair, and he added that an indemnity was due to him. At the same time, taking his licence-book from his pocket, he begged Mr. Inspector to have the kindness to write him a little bit of a certificate. Javert thrust back the book which the driver offered him and said :

"How much do you want, including the time you waited and the journey?"

"It's seven hours and a quarter," the driver answered, "and my velvet was bran new. Eighty francs, Mr. Inspector."

Javert took from his pocket four napoleons, and dismissed the hackney-coach. Jean Valjean thought that it was Javert's intention to take him on foot to the Blancs Manteaux post, or that of the Archives, which were close by. They entered the street, which was as usual deserted. Javert followed Jean Valjean, and, on reaching No. 7, the latter rapped, and the gate opened.

"Very good," said Javert, "go up."

He added, with a strange expression, and as if making an effort to speak as he was doing :

"I will wait for you here."

Jean Valjean looked at Javert, for this style of conduct was not at all a habit of Javert's. Still it could not surprise him greatly that Javert should now place in him a sort of haughty confidence, the confidence of the cat which grants the mouse liberty to the length of its claw. He thrust open the gate, entered the house, shouted to the porter, who was in bed, and had pulled the string without getting up, "It is I," and mounted the staircase. On reaching the first storey he paused, for every *Via dolorosa* has its stations. The window was open, and as is the case in many old houses, the staircase obtained light from, and looked out on, the

street. The street lantern, situated precisely opposite, threw some little light on the stairs, which caused the saving of a lamp. Jean Valjean, either to breathe or mechanically, thrust his head out of this window and looked down into the street. It is short, and the lamp lit it from one end to the other. Jean Valjean was bewildered with amazement.

Javert was gone.

Basque and the porter had carried Marius, who was still lying motionless on the sofa on which he had been laid on arriving, into the drawing-room. The physician, who had been sent for, hurried in, and Aunt Gillenormand had risen. Aunt Gillenormand came and went, horrified, clasping her hands, and incapable of doing anything but saying, "Can it be possible?" She added at intervals, "Everything will be stained with blood." When the first horror had passed away a certain philosophy of the situation appeared even in her mind, and was translated by the exclamation, "It must end in that way." She did not go so far, though, as "Did I not say so?" which is usual on occasions of this nature.

By the surgeon's orders a tester-bed was put up near the sofa. He examined Marius, and after satisfying himself that the pulse still beat, that the patient had no penetrating wound in the chest, and that the blood at the corners of the lips came from the nostrils, he had him laid flat on the bed, without a pillow, the head level with the body, and even a little lower, and with naked bust, in order to facilitate breathing. Mademoiselle Gillenormand, seeing that Marius was being undressed, withdrew, and told her beads in her bedroom. The body had received no internal injury; a ball, deadened by the pocket-book, had deviated, and passed round the ribs with a frightful gash, but as it was not deep it was, therefore, not dangerous. The long subterranean march had completed the dislocation of the collar-bone, and there were serious injuries there. The arms were covered with sabre-cuts: no scar disfigured the face, but the head was cut all over with gashes: what would be the state of these wounds on the head? did they stop at the scalp or did they reach the brain? it was impossible to say yet. It was a serious symptom that they had caused the faintness. And men do not always wake from such fainting-fits; the hæmorrhage, moreover, had exhausted the wounded man. From the waist downward, the lower part of the body had been protected by the barricade.



Basque and Nicolette tore up linen and prepared bandages : Nicolette sewed them and Basque rolled them. As they had no lint, the physician had temporarily checked the effusion of blood with cakes of wadding. By the side of the bed three candles burned on the table on which the surgeon's pocket-book lay open. He washed Marius' face and hair with cold water, and a bucketful was red in an instant. The porter, candle in hand, lighted him. The surgeon seemed to be thinking sadly : from time to time, he gave a negative shake of the head, as if answering some question which he mentally addressed to himself. Such mysterious dialogues of the physician with himself are a bad sign for the patient. At the moment when the surgeon was wiping the face and gently touching with his finger the still closed eyelids, a door opened at the end of the room, and a tall, pale figure appeared,—it was the grandfather. The riot during the last two days had greatly agitated, offended, and occupied M. Gillenormand ; he had not been able to sleep on the previous night, and he had been feverish all day. At night he went to bed at a very early hour, bidding his people bar up the house, and had fallen asleep through weariness.

Old men have a fragile sleep. M. Gillenormand's bedroom joined the drawing-room, and whatever precautions had been taken, the noise awoke him. Surprised by the crack of light which he saw in his door, he had got out of bed, and groped his way to the door. He was standing on the threshold, with one hand on the handle, his head slightly bent forward and shaking, his body enfolded in a white dressing-gown, as straight and creaseless as a winding-sheet : he was surprised, and looked like a ghost peering into a tomb. He noticed the bed, and on the mattress this young bleeding man, of the whiteness of wax, with closed eyes, open mouth, livid cheeks, naked to the waist, marked all over with vermillion, wounded, motionless, and brightly lighted.

The grandfather had from head to foot that shudder which ossified limbs can have. His eyes, whose cornea was yellow owing to their great age, were veiled by a sort of glassy stare ; his entire face assumed in an instant the earthy angles of a skeleton's head ; his arms fell pendent as if a spring had been broken in them, and his stupor was displayed by the outspreading of all the fingers of his two old trembling hands. His knees formed a

salient angle, displaying through the opening of his dressing-gown his poor naked legs bristling with white hairs, and he murmured :

"Marius !"

"He has just been brought here, sir," said Basque ; "he went to the barricade, and——"

"He is dead," the old gentleman exclaimed, in a terrible voice. "Oh ! the brigand !"

Then a sort of sepulchral transfiguration drew up this centenarian as straight as a young man.

"You are the surgeon, sir," he said ; "begin by telling me one thing. He is dead, is he not ?"

The surgeon, who was frightfully anxious, maintained silence, and M. Gillenormand writhed his hands with a burst of terrifying laughter.

"He is dead, he is dead ! he has let himself be killed at the barricade through hatred of me ; it was against me that he did it ! ah, the blood-drinker, that is the way in which he returns to me. Woe of my life, he is dead !"

He went to a window, opened it quite wide, as if he were stifling, and standing there began speaking to the night in the street.

"Pierced, sabred, massacred, exterminated, slashed, cut to pieces ! Do you see that, the beggar ! he knew very well that I expected him, and that I had his room ready, and that I had placed at my bed-head his portrait when he was a child ! He knew very well that he need only return, and that for years I had been recalling him, and that I sat at night by my fireside with my hands on my knees, not knowing what to do, and that I was crazy about him ! You knew that very well, you had only to return and say, 'It is I,' and you would be the master of the house, and I would obey you, and you could do anything you liked with your old ass of a grandfather ! You knew it very well, and said : 'No, he is a Royalist, I will not go !' and you went to the barricades, and have let yourself be killed out of spite ! in order to revenge yourself for what I said on the subject of Monsieur le Duc de Berry ! Is not that infamous ! Go to bed and sleep quietly, for he is dead. This is my awaking."

He went up to Marius, who was still livid and motionless, and began wringing his arms again. The old gentleman's white lips moved as it were mechanically, and allowed indistinct sentences to pass, which were scarce audible.



"Ah, heartless! ah, clubbist! ah, scoundrel! ah, Septembrist!" reproaches uttered in a low voice by a dying man to a corpse.

At this moment Marius slowly opened his eyes, and his glance, still veiled by lethargic surprise, settled on M. Gillenormand.

"Marius!" the old man cried, "Marius, my little Marius! my child! my beloved son! you open your eyes! you look at me! you are alive! thanks!"

And he fell fainting.

## CHAPTER CX.

JAVERT made his way slowly from the Rue de l'Homme Armé. He walked with drooping head for the first time in his life, and equally for the first time in his life with his hands behind his back. Up to that day Javert had only assumed, of Napoleon's two attitudes, the one which expresses resolution, the arms folded on the chest; the one indicating uncertainty, the arms behind the back, was unknown to him. Now a change had taken place, and his whole person, slow and sombre, was stamped with anxiety. He buried himself in the silent streets, but followed a certain direction; he went by the shortest road to the Seine, reached the Quai des Ormes, walked along it, passed the Grève, and stopped, a little distance from the Place du Châtelet, at the corner of the Pont Notre Dame. The Seine makes there, between that bridge and the Pont au Change on one side, and the Quai de la Mégisserie and the Quai aux Fleurs on the other, a species of square lake crossed by a rapid. This point of the Seine is feared by sailors; nothing can be more dangerous than this rapid, which was contracted at that period and irritated by the stakes of the mill bridge, since demolished. The two bridges, so close to each other, heighten the danger, for the water hurries formidably through the arches. Men who fall in there do not reappear, and the best swimmers are drowned.

Javert leant his elbows on the parapet, his chin on his hand, and while his hands mechanically closed on his thick whiskers, he reflected. A novelty, a revolution, a catastrophe had just taken place within him, and he must examine into it. Javert was suffering horribly, and for some hours past

Javert had ceased to be simple. He was troubled ; this brain, so limpid in its blindness, had lost its transparency, and there was a cloud in this crystal. Javert felt in his conscience duty doubled, and he could not hide the fact from himself. When he met Jean Valjean so unexpectedly on the Seine bank, he had something within him of the wolf that recaptures its prey and the dog that finds its master again. He saw before him two roads, both equally straight, but he saw two of them, and this terrified him, as he had never known in his life but one straight line. And, poignant agony, these two roads were contrary, and one of these right lines excluded the other. Which of the two was the true one ? His situation was indiscribable : to owe his life to a malefactor, to accept this debt and repay him ; to be, in spite of himself, on the same footing with an escaped convict, and requite one service with another service ; to let it be said to him, " Be off," and to say in his turn, " Be free ; " to sacrifice to personal motives duty, that general obligation, and to feel in these personal motives something general too, and perhaps superior ; to betray society in order to remain faithful to his conscience—that all these absurdities should be realised, and accumulated upon him, was what startled him. One thing had astonished him, that Jean Valjean had shown him mercy, and one thing had petrified him, that he, Javert, had shown mercy to Jean Valjean.

A sacred galley-slave ! a convict impregnable by justice, and that through the deed of Javert ! Was it not frightful that Javert and Jean Valjean, the man made to punish and the man made to endure, that these two men, who were both the property of the law, should have reached the point of placing themselves both above the law ? What ! such enormities could happen and no one be punished ? Jean Valjean, stronger than the whole social order, would be free, and he, Javert, would continue to eat the bread of the Government ! His reverie gradually became terrible : he might through this reverie have reproached himself slightly on the subject of the insurgent carried home to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, but he did not think of it. The slighter fault was lost in the greater, and, besides, this insurgent was evidently a dead man, and, legally, death checks prosecution. Jean Valjean,—that was the weight which he had on his mind ; and he disconcerted him. All the axioms which had been the support of his



whole life crumbled away before this man, and the generosity of Jean Valjean to him, Javert, overwhelmed him. Other facts which he remembered, and which he had formerly treated as falsehoods and folly, now returned to his mind as realities. M. Madeleine reappeared behind Jean Valjean, and the two figures were blended into one, which was venerable. Javert felt that something horrible, admiration for a convict, was entering his soul. Respect for a galley-slave, is it possible? he shuddered at it, and could not escape from it, although he struggled! he was reduced to confess in his soul the sublimity of this villain, and this was odious. A benevolent malefactor, a compassionate, gentle, helping, and merciful convict, repaying good for evil, pardon for hatred, preferring pity to vengeance, ready to destroy himself sooner than his enemy, saving the man who had struck him, kneeling on the pinnacle of virtue, and nearer to the angels than to man. Javert was constrained to confess to himself that such a monster existed.

The world was dismantled from top to bottom, and he was absolutely disconcerted! in what could men trust, when what they felt convinced of was crumbling away! What! the flaw in the cuirass of society could be formed by a magnanimous scoundrel! What! an honest servant of the law could find himself caught between two crimes, the crime of letting a man escape and the crime of arresting him! all was not certain, then, in the orders given by the State to the official! there could be blind alleys in duty! What, then! all this was real! was it true that an ex-bandit, bowed under condemnations, could draw himself up and end by being in the right? was this credible? were there, then, cases in which the law must retire before transfigured crime and stammer its apologies! Yes, it was so! and Javert saw it! and Javert touched it! and not only could he not deny it but he had a share in it. These were realities, and it was abominable that real facts could attain such a deformity. If facts did their duty they would restrict themselves to being proofs of the law; for facts are sent by God. Was, then, anarchy about to descend from on high? Thus, both in the exaggeration of agony and the optical illusion of consternation, everything which might have restricted and corrected his impression faded away, and society, the human race, and the universe henceforth were contained for his eyes in a simple and hideous outline—punishment, the thing tried, the strength due to the



legislature, the decrees of sovereign courts, the magistracy, the government, prevention, and repression, official wisdom, legal infallibility, the principle of authority, all the dogmas on which political and civil security, the sovereignty, justice, logic flowing from the code and public truth, were a heap of ruins, chaos; he himself, Javert, the watcher of order, incorruptibility in the service of the police, the providence-dog of society, conquered and hurled to the ground, and on the summit of all this ruin stood a man in a green cap, and with a halo round his brow; such was the state of overthrow he had reached, such the frightful vision which he had in his mind. Was this endurable? no, it was a violent state, were there ever one, and there were only two ways of escaping from it; one was to go resolutely to Jean Valjean and restore to the dungeon the man of the galleys; the other—

Javert left the parapet, and, with head erect this time, walked firmly toward the guardroom indicated by a lantern at one of the corners of the Place du Châtelet. On reaching it he saw through the window a policeman, and went in. The police recognise each other merely by the way in which they push open the door of a guardroom. Javert mentioned his name, showed his card to the sergeant, and sat down at the table on which a candle was burning. There were on the table a pen, a leaden inkstand, and paper for drawing up verbal processes, and the reports of the night patrols. This table, always completed by a straw chair, is an institution; it exists in all police-offices, it is always adorned with a boxwood saucer full of sawdust, and a box of red wafers, and it is the lower stage of the official style. It is here that the State literature commences. Javert took the pen and a sheet of paper and began writing. This is what he wrote :—

“SOME OBSERVATIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SERVICE.

“First : I beg M. le Préfet to glance at this.

“Secondly : Prisoners when they return from examination at the magistrate's office take off their shoes and remain barefooted on the slabs while they are being searched. Many cough on returning to the prison. This entails infirmary expenses.

“Thirdly : Tracking is good, with relays of agents at regular distances; but on important occasions two agents



at the least should not let each other out of sight, because, if for any reason one agent were to fail in his duty, the other would watch him and take his place.

"Fourthly : There is no explanation why the special rules of the prison of Les Madelonnettes prohibit a prisoner from having a chair, even if he pay for it.

"Fifthly : At Les Madelonnettes there are only two gratings to the canteen, which allows the canteen woman to let the prisoners touch her hand.

"Sixthly : The prisoners called barkers, who call the other prisoners to the visitor's room, demand two sous from each prisoner for crying his name distinctly. This is a robbery.

"Seventhly : For a dropped thread, they retain ten sous from the prisoner in the weaving shop ; this is an abuse on the part of the manager, as the cloth is not the less good."

Javert wrote these lines in his calmest and most correct handwriting, not omitting to cross a *t*, and making the paper squeak beneath his pen. Under the last line he signed,

"JAVERT,

"Inspector of the 1st class.

"At the post of the Place du Châtelet, June 7, 1832,  
about one in the morning."

Javert dried the ink on the paper, folded it like a letter, sealed it, wrote on the back, "Note for the Administration," left it on the table, and quitted the guardroom. The glass door fell back after him. He again diagonally crossed the Place du Châtelet, reached the quay again, and went back with automatic precision to the same spot which he had left a quarter of an hour previously ; he bent down and found himself again in the same attitude on the same parapet slab. It seemed as if he had not stirred. The darkness was complete, for it was the sepulchral moment which follows midnight ; a ceiling of clouds hid the stars. Rains had swelled the river. The spot where Javert was leaning was, it will be remembered, precisely above the rapids of the Seine, perpendicularly over that formidable whirlpool which knots and unknots itself like an endless screw. Javert stooped down and looked ; all was dark, and nothing could be distinguished. A sound of spray was audible, but the river was invisible. At moments in this dizzy depth a flash appeared and undulated, for water has the power, even on the darkest night, of obtaining light,

no one knows whence, and changing itself into a lizard. The light faded away, and all became indistinct again. Immensity seemed open there, and what was beneath was not water, but the gulf. The quay-wall, abrupt, confused, mingled with the vapour, produced the effect of a precipice of infinitude.

Javert remained for some moments motionless, gazing at this opening of the darkness; he considered the invisible with a fixedness which resembled attention. All at once he took off his hat and placed it on the brink of the quay. A moment after a tall black figure, which any belated passer-by might have taken at a distance for a ghost, appeared standing on the parapet, stooped toward the Seine, then drew itself up, and fell straight into the darkness. There was a dull splash, and the shadows alone were in the secret of this obscure form which had disappeared beneath the waters.

## CHAPTER CXI.

SOME time after the events which we have just related the *Sieur Boulatruelle* had a lively emotion. The *Sieur Boulatrouelle* is the road-mender of *Montfermeil* of whom we have already caught a glimpse in the dark portions of this book. *Boulatruelle*, it will possibly be remembered, was a man occupied with troublous and various things. He broke stones and plundered travellers on the highway. Road-mender and robber, he had a dream: he believed in the treasures buried in the forest of *Montfermeil*. He hoped some day to find money in the ground at the foot of a tree, and in the meanwhile readily sought in the pockets of passers-by. Still, for the present, he was prudent, for he had just had a narrow escape. He was, as we know, picked up with the other ruffians in *Jondrette's* garret. There is some usefulness in a vice, for his drunkenness saved him, and it never could be cleared up whether he were there as a robber or as a robbed man. He was set at liberty on account of his proved intoxication on the night of the attack, and he returned to the woods. He went back to his road from *Gagny* to *Lagny*, to break stones for the State, under surveillance, with hanging head, very thoughtful, slightly chilled by the robbery, which had almost ruined him, but turning with all the more tenderness to the wine which had saved him.



As for the lively emotion which he had a short time after his return beneath the turf-roof of his road-mender's cabin, it was this. One morning Boulatruelle, while going as usual to work and to his lurking-place, possibly a little before daybreak, perceived among the branches a man whose back he could alone see, but whose shape, so he fancied, through the mist and darkness, was not entirely unknown to him. Boulatruelle, though a drunkard, had a correct and lucid memory, an indispensable defensive weapon for any man who is at all on bad terms with legal order.

"Where the deuce have I seen some one like that man?" he asked.

But he could give himself no reply, save that he resembled somebody of whom he had a confused recollection. Boulatruelle, however, made his calculations, though he was unable to settle the identity. This man did not belong to those parts, and had come there evidently on foot, as no public vehicle passed through Montfermeil at that hour. He must have been walking all night. Where did he come from? no great distance, for he had neither haversack nor bundle. Doubtless from Paris. Why was he in this wood? why was he there at such an hour? What did he want here? Boulatruelle thought of the treasure: by dint of racking his memory he vaguely remembered having had, several years previously, a similar alarm on the subject of a man, who might very well be this man. While meditating he had, under the very weight of his meditation, hung his head, which was natural but not very clever. When he raised it again the man had disappeared in the forest and the mist.

"The deuce," said Boulatruelle, "I will find him again, and discover to what parish that parishioner belongs. This walker of Patron-Minette has a motive, and I will know it. No one must have a secret in my forest without my being mixed up in it."

He took up his pick, which was very sharp. "Here's something," he growled, "to search the ground and a man."

And as one thread is attached to another thread, hobbling as fast as he could in the direction which the man must have followed, he began marching through the coppice. When he had gone about a hundred yards, day, which was beginning to break, aided him. Footsteps on the sand



here and there, trampled grass, broken heather, young branches bent into the shrubs and rising with a graceful slowness, like the arms of a pretty woman who stretches herself on waking, gave him a species of trail. He followed it, then lost it, and time slipped away; he got deeper into the wood and reached a species of eminence. A matutinal sportsman passing at a distance along a path, and whistling the air of Guillery, gave him the idea of climbing up a tree, and though old, he was active. There was on the mound a very large beech, worthy of Tityrus and Boulatruelle, and he climbed up the tree as high as he could. The idea was a good one, for while exploring the solitude on the side where the wood is most entangled, Boulatruelle suddenly perceived the man, but had no sooner seen him than he lost sight of him again. The man entered, or rather glided, into a rather distant clearing, masked by large trees, but which Boulatruelle knew very well, because he had noticed near a large heap of stones a sick chestnut tree, bandaged with a zinc belt nailed upon it. This clearing is what was formerly called the Blaru-bottom, and the pile of stones, intended no one knows for what purpose, which could be seen there thirty years ago, is doubtless there still. Nothing equals the longevity of a heap of stones, except that of a plank, hoarding. It is there temporarily. What a reason for lasting!

Boulatruelle, with the rapidity of joy, tumbled off the tree, rather than came down it. The lair was found, and now he had only to seize the animal. The famous treasure he had dreamed of was probably there. It was no small undertaking to reach the clearing. By beaten paths, which make a thousand annoying windings, it would take a good quarter of an hour; in a straight line through the wood, which is at that spot singularly dense, very thorny, and most aggressive, it would take half an hour at least. This is what Boulatruelle was wrong in not understanding; he believed in the straight line, a respectable optical illusion, which has ruined many men. The wood, bristling though it was, appeared to him the right road.

"Let us go by the Rue de Rivoli of the wolves," he said.

Boulatruelle, accustomed to crooked paths, this time committed the error of going straight, and resolutely cast himself among the shrubs. He had to contend with holly, nettles, hawthorns, eglantines, thistles, and most irascible roots, and was fearfully scratched. At the bottom of the



ravine he came to a stream, which he was obliged to cross, and at last reached the Blaru clearing after forty minutes, perspiring, wet through, blowing, and ferocious. There was no one in the clearing. Boulatruelle hurried to the heap of stones; it was still in its place, and had not been carried off. As for the man, he had vanished in the forest. He had escaped; where? in which direction? into which clump of trees? it was impossible to guess. And, most crushing thing of all, there was behind the heap of stones and in front of the zinc-banded tree a pick, forgotten or abandoned, and a hole; but the hole was empty.

"Robber!" Boulatruelle cried, shaking his fists at the horizon.

## CHAPTER CXII.

MARIUS was for a long time neither dead nor alive. He had for several weeks a fever, accompanied by delirium, and very serious brain symptoms caused by the concussion produced by the wounds in the head rather than the wounds themselves. He repeated Cosette's name for whole nights with the lugubrious loquacity of fever and the gloomy obstinacy of agony. The width of certain wounds was a serious danger, the suppuration of wide wounds always being liable to reabsorption, and consequently killing the patient, under certain atmospheric influences; and at each change in the weather, at the slightest storm, the physician became anxious. "Mind that the patient suffers from no excitement," he repeated. The dressings were complicated and difficult, for the fixing of bandages and lint by the sparadrap had not been invented at that period. Nicolette expended in lint a sheet "as large as a ceiling," she said; and it was not without difficulty that the chloruretted lotions and nitrate of silver reached the end of the gangrene. So long as there was danger, M. Gillenormand, broken-hearted by the bedside of his grandson, was like Marius, neither dead nor alive.

Every day, and sometimes twice a day, a white-haired and well-dressed gentleman, such was the description given by the porter, came to inquire after the wounded man, and left a large parcel of lint for the dressings. At length, on September 7th, four months, day by day, from the painful night on which he had been brought home dying to his grandfather, the physician declared that he could answer

for him, and that convalescence was setting in. Marius, however, would be obliged to lie for two months longer on a couch, owing to the accidents produced by the fracture of the collar-bone. There is always a last wound like that which will not close, and prolongs the dressings, to the great annoyance of the patient. This long illness and lengthened convalescence, however, saved him from prosecution: in France there is no anger, even public, which six months do not extinguish. Riots, in the present state of society, are so much everybody's fault, that they are followed by a certain necessity of closing the eyes. Hence Marius was left tranquil.

M. Gillenormand first passed through every form of agony, and then through every form of ecstasy. They had great difficulty in keeping him from passing the whole night by Marius' side; he had his large easy-chair brought to the bed; and he insisted on his daughter taking the finest linen in the house to make compresses and bandages. Mademoiselle Gillenormand, as a sensible and elderly lady, managed to save the fine linen, while making her father believe that he was obeyed. M. Gillenormand would not listen to any explanation, that for the purpose of making lint fine linen is not so good as coarse, or new so good as worn. He was present at all the dressings, from which Mademoiselle Gillenormand modestly absented herself. Nothing was so touching as to see him hand the wounded man a cup of broth with his gentle senile trembling. He overwhelmed the surgeon with questions, and did not perceive that he constantly repeated the same. On the day when the physician informed him that Marius was out of danger he was beside himself. He gave his porter three louis d'or, and at night, when he went to his bedroom, danced a gavotte, making castanets of his thumb and forefinger, and sang a song.

Then he knelt on a chair, and Basque, who was watching him through the crack of the door, felt certain that he was praying. Up to that day he had never believed in God. At each new phase in the improvement of the patient, which went on steadily, the grandfather was extravagant. He performed a multitude of mechanical actions full of delight: he went up and down stairs without knowing why. A neighbour's wife, who was very pretty, by the way, was stupefied at receiving one morning a large bouquet: it was M. Gillenormand who sent it to her, and her husband

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got up a jealous scene. He called Marius *Monsieur le Baron*, and shouted, "Long live the Republic!" Every moment he asked the medical man, "There is no danger now, is there?" He looked at Marius with a grandmother's eyes, and gloated over him when he slept. He no longer knew himself, no longer took himself into account. Marius was the master of the house, there was abdication in his joy, and he was the grandson of his grandson. In his present state of merriment he was the most venerable of children: through fear of wearying or annoying the convalescent, he would place himself behind him in order to smile upon him. He was satisfied, joyous, enraptured, charming, and young, and his white hair added a gentle majesty to the gay light which he had on his face. When grace is mingled with wrinkles it is adorable; and there is a peculiar dawn in expansive old age.

As for Marius, while letting himself be nursed and petted, he had one fixed idea, *Cosette*. Since the fever and delirium had left him he no longer pronounced this name, and it might be supposed that he had forgotten it, but he was silent precisely because his soul was in it. He knew not what had become of *Cosette*: the whole affair of the *Rue de la Chanvrerie* was like a cloud in his memory; almost indistinct shadows floated in his mind. *Eponine*, *Gavroche*, *Mabœuf*, the *Thénardiens*, and all his friends, mournfully mingled with the smoke of the barricade, the strange passage of *M. Fauchelevent* through that bloodstained adventure, produced upon him the effect of an enigma in a tempest: he understood nothing of his own life, he knew not how or by whom he had been saved, and no one about him knew it either: all they were able to tell him was that he had been brought there at night in a hackney-coach: past, present, future, all this was to him like the mist of a vague idea; but there was in this mist one immovable point, a clear and precise lineament, something made of granite, a resolution, a will—to find *Cosette* again. For him the idea of life was not distinct from the idea of *Cosette*: he had decreed in his heart that he would not receive one without the other, and he unalterably determined to demand of his grandfather, of destiny, of fate, of *Hades* itself, the restitution of his lost Eden.

He did not conceal the obstacles from himself. Here let us underline one fact: he was not won or greatly affected by all the anxiety and all the tenderness of his grandfather.



In the first place he was not in the secret of them all, and next, in his sick man's reveries, which were perhaps still feverish, he distrusted this gentleness as a strange and new thing intended to subdue him. He remained cold to it, and the poor grandfather lavished his smiles in pure loss. Marius said to himself that it was all very well so long as he did not speak and let matters rest, but when he came to Cosette, he should find another face, and his grandfather's real attitude would be unmasked. Then the affair would be rude; a warming up of family questions, a confrontment of position, every possible sarcasm and objection at once. Fauchelevent, Coupevent, fortune, poverty, wretchedness, the stone on the neck, and the future, a violent resistance, and the conclusion,—a refusal. Marius stiffened himself against it beforehand. And then, in proportion as he regained life, his old wrongs reappeared, the old ulcers of his memory reopened; he thought again of the past. Colonel Pontmercy placed himself once more between M. Gillenormand and him, Marius, and he said to himself that he had no real kindness to hope for from a man who had been so unjust and harsh to his father. And with health came back a sort of bitterness against his grandfather, from which the old man gently suffered. M. Gillenormand, without letting it be seen, noticed that Marius, since he had been brought home and regained consciousness, had never once called him father. He did not say Sir, it is true, but he managed to say neither one nor the other, by a certain way of turning his sentences.

A crisis was evidently approaching, and, as nearly always happens in such cases, Marius, in order to try himself, skirmished before offering battle; this is called feeling the ground. One morning it happened that M. Gillenormand, alluding to a newspaper which he had come across, spoke lightly of the Convention, and darted a Royalist epigram at Danton, St. Just, and Robespierre. "The men of '93 were giants," Marius said sternly; the old man was silent, and did not utter another syllable all the day. Marius, who had the inflexible grandfather of his early years ever present to his mind, saw in this silence a profound concentration of anger, augured from it an obstinate struggle, and augmented his preparations for the contest in the back nooks of his mind. He determined that in case of refusal he would tear off his bandages, dislocate his collar-bone, expose all the wounds still unhealed, and refuse all food. His wounds



were his ammunition; he must have Cosette or die. He awaited the favourable moment with the crafty patience of sick persons, and the moment arrived.

One day M. Gillenormand, while his daughter was arranging the phials and cups on the marble slab of the sideboard, leant over Marius, and said in his most tender accent :

"Look you, my little Marius, in your place I would rather eat meat than fish; a fried sole is excellent at the beginning of a convalescence, but a good cutlet is necessary to put the patient on his legs."

Marius, whose strength had nearly quite returned, sat up, rested his two clenched fists on his sheet, looked his grandfather in the face, assumed a terrible air, and said :

"That induces me to say one thing to you."

"What is it?"

"That I wish to marry."

"Foreseen," said the grandfather, bursting into a laugh.

"How foreseen?"

"Yes, foreseen. You shall have your little maid."

Marius, stupefied and dazzled, trembled in all his limbs, and M. Gillenormand continued :

"Yes, you shall have the pretty little dear. She comes every day in the form of an old gentleman to ask after you. Ever since you have been wounded she has spent her time in crying and making lint. I made inquiries; she lives at No. 7 Rue de l'Homme Armé. Ah! there we are! Ah, you want her, do you? well, you shall have her. There's a take-in for you; you had made your little plot, and had said to yourself, 'I will tell it point-blank to that grandfather, that mummy of the Regency and the Directory, that old beau; he has had his frolics too, and his amourettes, and his grisettes, and his Cosettes; he has had his fling, he has had his wings, and he has eaten the bread of spring; he must surely remember it, we shall see. Battle!' Ah, you take the cockchafer by the horns, very good. I offer you a cutlet, and you answer me, 'By the bye, I wish to marry.' By Jupiter Ammon, that is a transition! Ah, you made up your mind for a quarrel, but you did not know that I was an old coward. What do you say to that? You are done, you did not expect to find your grandfather more stupid than yourself. You have lost the speech you intended to make me, master lawyer, and that is annoying. Well, all the worse, rage away; I do what you want, and that

cuts the speech short, ass. Listen ! I have made my inquiries, for I too am cunning ; she is charming, she is virtuous, she has made heaps of lint, she is a jewel, she adores you ; if you had died there would have been three of us, and her coffin would have accompanied mine. I had the idea, as soon as you were better, of planting her there by your bedside, but it is only in romances that girls are introduced to the beds of handsome young wounded men in whom they take an interest. That would not do, for what would your aunt say ? You were quite naked three parts of the time, sir ; ask Nicolette, who never left you for a moment, whether it were possible for a female to be here ? And, then, what would the doctor have said ? for a pretty girl does not cure a fever. Well, say no more about it, it is settled and done. Take her. Look you, I saw that you did not love me, and I said, 'What can I do to make that animal love me ?' I said, 'Stay, I have my little Cosette ready to hand. I will give her to him, and then he must love me a little, or tell me the reason why.' Ah ! you believed that the old man would storm, talk big, cry no, and lift his cane against all this dawn. Not at all. Cosette, very good ; love, very good ; I ask for nothing better. Take the trouble, sir, to marry, be happy, my beloved child."

After saying this the old man burst into sobs ; he took Marius' head and pressed it to his old bosom, and both began weeping. That is one of the forms of supreme happiness.

"My father !" Marius exclaimed.

"Ah, you love me then !" the old man said.

There was an ineffable moment ; they were choking and could not speak ; at length the old man stammered :

"Come ! the stopper is taken out of him ; he called me 'father.'"

Marius disengaged his head from his grandfather's arms, and said gently :

"Now that I am better, father, I fancy I could see her."

"Foreseen, too, you will see her to-morrow."

"Why not to-day ?"

"Well, to-day ; done for to-day. You have called me father twice, and it's worth that. I will see about it, and she shall be brought here."

Cosette and Marius saw each other again. We will not attempt to describe the interview ; for there are things which we must not attempt to paint : the sun is of the number. The



whole family, Basque and Nicolette included, were assembled in Marius' chamber at the moment when Cosette entered. She appeared in the doorway, and seemed to be surrounded by a halo : precisely at the moment this grandfather was going to blow his nose, but he stopped short, holding his nose in his handkerchief and looking over it.

"Adorable !" he cried.

And then he blew a sonorous blast. Cosette was intoxicated, enraptured, startled, in heaven. She was as timid as a person can be through happiness ; she stammered, turned pale, and then pink, and wished to throw herself into Marius' arms, but dared not. She was ashamed of loving before so many people ; for the world is merciless to happy lovers, and always remains at the very moment when they most long to be alone. And yet they do not want these people at all. With Cosette, but behind her, had entered a white-haired man, serious, but still smiling, though the smile was wandering and poignant. It was "Monsieur Fauchelevent,"—it was Jean Valjean. He was "well-dressed," as the porter had said, in a new black suit and a white cravat. The porter was a thousand leagues from recognising in this correct citizen, this probable notary, the frightful corpse-bearer who had risen at the gate on the night of June 7th, ragged, filthy, hideous, and haggard, with a mask of blood and mud on his face, supporting in his arms the unconscious Marius ; still his porter's instincts were aroused. When M. Fauchelevent arrived with Cosette, the porter could not refrain from confiding this aside to his wife, "I don't know why, but I fancy that I have seen that face before." M. Fauchelevent remained standing by the door of Marius' room, as if afraid ; he held under his arm a packet rather like an octavo volume wrapped in paper. The paper was green, apparently from mildew.

"Has this gentleman always got books under his arm like that ?" Mademoiselle Gillenormand, who was not fond of books, asked Nicolette in a whisper.

"Well," M. Gillenormand, who had heard her, answered in the same key, "he is a savant, is that his fault ? Monsieur Boulard, whom I knew, never went out without a book either, and had always one close to his heart."

Then bowing, he said, in a loud voice :

"Monsieur Trachevent."

Father Gillenormand did not do it purposely, but an inattention to proper names was an aristocratic way of his.

"Monsieur Trachevent, I have the honour of requesting this lady's hand for my grandson, M. le Baron Marius Pontmercy?"

Monsieur "Trachevent" bowed.

"All right," the grandfather said.

And turning to Marius and Cosette, with both arms extended in benediction, he cried:

"You have leave to adore each other."

They did not let it be said twice, and the prattling began. They talked in a whisper, Marius reclining on his couch and Cosette standing by his side. "Oh, Heaven!" Cosette murmured, "I see you again: it is you. To go and fight like that! But why? it is horrible. For four months I have been dead. Oh, how wicked it was of you to have been at that battle! What had I done to you? I forgive you, but you will not do it again. Just now, when they came to tell me to come to you, I thought again that I was going to die, but it was of joy. I was so sad! I did not take time to dress myself, and I must look frightful; what will your relations say at seeing me in a tumbled collar? But speak! you let me speak all alone. We are still in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. It seems that your shoulder was terrible, and I was told that I could put my hand in it, and then it seems that your flesh was cut with scissors. How frightful that is! I wept so that I have no eyes left. It is strange that a person can suffer like that. Your grandfather has a very kind look. Do not disturb yourself, do not get on your elbow like that, or you will do yourself an injury. Oh, how happy I am! So our misfortunes are all ended! I am quite foolish. There were things I wanted to say to you which I have quite forgotten. Do you love me still? We live in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. There is no garden there. I made lint the whole time; look here, sir, it is your fault, my fingers are quite rough."

"Angel!" said Marius.

*Angel* is the only word in the language which cannot be worn out; no other word would resist the pitiless use which lovers make of it. Then, as there was company present, they broke off, and did not say a word more, contenting themselves with softly clasping hands. M. Gillenormand turned to all the rest in the room, and cried:

"Speak loudly, good people; make a noise, will you. Come, a little row, hang it all, so that these children may prattle at their ease."



And going up to Marius and Cosette, he whispered to them :

"Go on ; don't put yourselves out of the way."

Aunt Gillenormand witnessed with stupor this irruption of light into her antiquated house. This stupor had nothing aggressive about it ; it was not at all the scandalised and envious glance cast by an owl at two ring-doves ; it was the stupid eye of a poor innocent of the age of fifty-seven ; it was a spoiled life looking at that triumph, love.

"Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder," her father said to her, "I told you that this would happen."

He remained silent for a moment, and added :

"Look at the happiness of others."

Then he turned to Cosette.

"How pretty she is ! how pretty she is ! she is a Greuze ! So you are going to have all that for yourself, scamp ? Ah, my boy, you have had a lucky escape from me ; for if I were not fifteen years too old we would fight with swords and see who should have her. There, I am in love with you, mademoiselle ; but it is very simple, it is your right. What a famous, charming little wedding we will have ! Saint Denis du Saint Sacrement is our parish ; but I will procure a dispensation, so that you may be married at St. Paul's, for the church is better. It was built for the Jesuits, and is more coquettish. It is opposite Cardinal Birague's fountain."

The grandfather pirouetted on his nonagenarian heels, and began speaking again, like a spring which has been wound up. Then he sat down by their side, made Cosette take a chair, and took their four hands in his old wrinkled hands.

"This darling is exquisite. This Cosette is a masterpiece ! She is a very little girl and a very great lady. She will be only a baroness, and that is a derogation, for she was born to be a marchioness. What eyelashes she has ! My children, drive it into your noddles that you are on the right road. Love one another ; be foolish over it, for love is the stupidity of men and the cleverness of God. So adore one another. Still," he added, suddenly growing sad, "what a misfortune ! more than half I possess is sunk in annuities ; so long as I live it will be all right, but when I am dead, twenty years hence, ah ! my poor children, you will not have a farthing. Your pretty white hands, Madame la Baronne, will be wrinkled by work."

Here a serious and calm voice was heard saying :

"Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevent has six hundred thousand francs."

It was Jean Valjean's voice. He had not yet uttered a syllable; no one seemed to remember that he was present, and he stood motionless behind all these happy people.

"Who is the Mademoiselle Euphrasie in question?" the startled grandfather asked.

"Myself," said Cosette.

"Six hundred thousand francs!" M. Gillenormand repeated.

"Less fourteen or fifteen thousand, perhaps," Jean Valjean said.

And he laid on the table the parcel which Aunt Gillenormand had taken for a book. Jean Valjean himself opened the packet; it was a bundle of bank-notes. They were turned over and counted; there were five hundred bank-notes for a thousand francs, and one hundred and sixty-eight for five hundred, forming a total of five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs.

"That's a famous book," said M. Gillenormand.

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" the aunt murmured.

"That arranges a good many things, does it not, Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder?" the grandfather continued. "That devil of a Marius has found a millionaire grisette upon the tree of dreams! Now trust to the amourettes of young people! Students find studentesses with six hundred thousand francs. Cherubin works better than Rothschild."

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" Mademoiselle Gillenormand repeated; "five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs! we may as well say six hundred thousand."

As for Marius and Cosette, they were looking at each other during this period, and hardly paid any attention to the circumstances.

Of course our readers have understood, and no lengthened explanation will be required, that Jean Valjean after the Champmathieu affair was enabled by his escape for a few days to come to Paris, and withdraw in time from Laffitte's the sum he had gained under the name of M. Madeleine at M—— sur M——; and that, afraid of being recaptured, which in fact happened to him shortly after, he buried this sum in the forest of Montfermeil, at the spot



called the Blaru-bottom. The sum, six hundred and thirty thousand francs, all in bank-notes, occupied but little space, and was contained in a box; but in order to protect the box from damp he placed it in an oak coffer filled with chips of chestnut-wood. In the same coffer he placed his other treasure, the Bishop's candlesticks. It will be remembered that he carried off these candlesticks in his escape from M—— sur M——. The man seen on one previous evening by Boulatruelle was Jean Valjean, and afterwards, whenever Jean Valjean required money, he fetched it from the Blaru clearing, and hence his absences to which we have referred. He had a pick concealed somewhere in the shrubs, in a hiding-place known to himself alone. When he found Marius to be convalescent, feeling that the hour was at hand when this money might be useful, he went to fetch it; and it was again he whom Boulatruelle saw in the wood, but this time in the morning, and not at night. Boulatruelle inherited the pick.

The real sum was five hundred and eighty-four thousand five hundred francs, but Jean Valjean kept back the five hundred francs for himself. "We will see afterwards," he thought. The difference between this sum and the six hundred and thirty thousand francs withdrawn from Laffitte's represented the expenditure of ten years, from 1823 to 1833. The five years' residence in the convent had only cost five thousand francs. Jean Valjean placed the two silver candlesticks on the mantelpiece, where they glistened, to the great admiration of Toussaint. Moreover, Jean Valjean knew himself freed from Javert; it had been stated in his presence, and he verified the fact in the *Moniteur* which had published it, that an Inspector of Police of the name of Javert had been found drowned under a washerwoman's boat between the Pont au Change and the Pont Neuf, and that a letter left by this man, hitherto irreproachable and highly esteemed by his chiefs, led to the belief in an attack of dementia and suicide. "In truth," thought Jean Valjean, "since he let me go when he had hold of me he must have been mad at that time."

All the preparations for the marriage were made. The physician, on being consulted, declared that it might take place in February. It was now December, and a few ravishing weeks of perfect happiness slipped away. The least happy man was not the grandfather; he would sit for a whole quarter of an hour contemplating Cosette.



"The admirably pretty girl!" he would exclaim, "and she has so soft and kind an air! She is the most charming creature I have ever seen in my life. Presently she will have virtues with a violet scent. She is one of the Graces, on my faith! A man can only live nobly with such a creature. Marius, my lad, you are a baron, you are rich, so do not be a pettifogger, I implore you."

Cosette and Marius had suddenly passed from the sepulchre into paradise: the transition had not been prepared, and they would have been stunned if they had not been dazzled.

"Do you understand anything of all this?" Marius said to Cosette.

"No," Cosette answered, "but it seems to me as if *le bon Dieu* were looking at us."

Jean Valjean did everything, smoothed everything, conciliated everything, and rendered everything easy. He hurried toward Cosette's happiness with as much eagerness and apparently with as much joy as Cosette herself. As he had been Mayor, he was called to solve a delicate problem, the secret of which he alone possessed,—the civil status of Cosette. To tell her origin openly might have prevented the marriage, but he got Cosette out of all the difficulties. He arranged for her a family of dead people, a sure method of not incurring any inquiry. Cosette was the only one left of an extinct family. Cosette was not his daughter but the daughter of another Fauchelevant. Two brothers Fauchelevant had been gardeners at the convent of the Little Picpus: they went to this convent; the best testimonials and most satisfactory character were given; for the good nuns, little suited, and but little inclined to solve questions of paternity, had never known exactly of which of the two Fauchelevants Cosette was the daughter. They said what was wanted, and said it zealously. An act of notoriety was drawn up, and Cosette became by law Mademoiselle Euphrasie Fauchelevant, and was declared an orphan both on the father's and mother's side. Jean Valjean managed so as to be designated, under the name of Fauchelevant, as guardian of Cosette, with M. Gillenormand as supervising guardian. As for the five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs, they were a legacy left to Cosette by a dead person who wished to remain unknown: the original legacy had been five hundred and ninety-four thousand francs, but ten thousand had been



spent in the education of Mademoiselle Euphrasie, five thousand of which had been paid to the convent. This legacy, deposited in the hands of a third party, was to be handed over to Cosette upon her majority, or at the period of her marriage. All this was highly acceptable, as we see, especially when backed up by more than half a million francs. There were certainly a few singular points here and there, but they were not seen, for one of the persons interested had his eyes bandaged by love, and the others by the six hundred thousand francs.

\* Cosette learned that she was not the daughter of the old man whom she had so long called father; he was only a relation, and another Fauchelevent was her real father. At another moment this would have grieved her, but in the ineffable hour she had now reached it was only a slight shadow, a passing cloud; and she had so much joy that this cloud lasted but a short time. She had Marius: the young man came, the old man disappeared; life is so. And then, Cosette had been accustomed for many long years to see enigmas around her; every being who has had a mysterious childhood is ever ready for certain renunciations. Still she continued to call Jean Valjean "father." Cosette, who was among the angels, was enthusiastic about Father Gillenormand; it is true that he overwhelmed her with madrigals and presents. While Jean Valjean was constructing for Cosette an unassailable position in society, M. Gillenormand attended to the wedding trousseau. Nothing amused him so much as to be magnificent; and he had given Cosette a gown of Binche guipure, which he inherited from his own grandmother. "These fashions spring up again," he said, "antiquities are the great demand, and the young ladies of my old days dress themselves like the old ladies of my youth." He plundered his respectable round-bellied commodes of Coromandel lacquer, which had not been opened for years. "Let us shrive these dowagers," he said, "and see what they have in their paunch." He noisily violated drawers full of the dresses of all his wives, all his mistresses, and all his female ancestry. He lavished on Cosette, Chinese satins, damasks, lampas, painted moires, gros de Naples dresses, Indian handkerchiefs embroidered with gold that can be washed, Genoa and Alençon point lace, sets of old jewellery, ivory bonbon boxes adorned with microscopic battles, laces, and ribbons. Cosette, astounded, wild with love for Marius and with gratitude



to M. Gillenormand, dreamed of an unbounded happiness, dressed in satin and velvet. Her wedding-basket seemed to her supported by seraphim, and her soul floated in ether with wings of Mechlin lace. The intoxication of the lovers was only equalled, as we stated, by the ecstasy of the grandfather, and there was something like a flourish of trumpets in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. Each morning there was a new offering of bric-à-brac from the grandfather to Cosette, and all sorts of ornaments were spread out splendidly around her.

It was arranged that the couple should reside at M.<sup>re</sup> Gillenormand's, and the grandfather insisted on giving them his bedroom, the finest room in the house. "It will make me younger," he declared. "It is an old place. I always had the idea that the wedding should take place in my room." He furnished this room with a heap of old articles of gallantry; he had it hung with an extraordinary fabric which he had in the piece, and believed to be Utrecht, a gold satin ground with velvet auriculas. "It was with that stuff," he said, "that the bed of the Duchess d'Anville à la Rocheguyon was hung." He placed on the mantel-piece a figure in Saxon porcelain carrying a muff on its naked stomach. M. Gillenormand's library became the office which Marius required, for an office, it will be borne in mind, is insisted upon by the council of the order.

## CHAPTER CXIII.

THE lovers saw each other every day. Cosette came with M. Fauchelevent. "It is turning things topsy-turvy," said Mademoiselle Gillenormand, "that the lady should come to the gentleman's house to have court paid to her in that way." But Marius' convalescence had caused the adoption of the habit, and the easy-chairs of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, more convenient for a *tête-à-tête* than the straw-bottomed chairs of the Rue de l'Homme Armé, had decided it. Marius and M. Fauchelevent saw each other, but did not speak, and this seemed to be agreed on. Every girl needs a chaperon, and Cosette could not have come without M. Fauchelevent; and for Marius, M. Fauchelevent was the condition of Cosette, and he accepted him. In discussing vaguely, and without any precision, political matters as connected with the improvement of all, they managed to



say a little more than yes and no. Once, on the subject of instruction, which Marius wished to be gratuitous and obligatory, multiplied in every form, lavished upon all like light and air, and, in a word, respirable by the entire people, they were agreed, and almost talked. Marius remarked on this occasion that M. Fauchelevent spoke well, and even with a certain elevation of language, though something was wanting. M. Fauchelevent had something less than a man of the world, and something more. Marius, in his innermost thoughts, surrounded with all sorts of questions this M. Fauchelevent, who was to him simple, well-wishing, and cold. At times doubts occurred to him as to his own recollections; he had a hole in his memory, a black spot, an abyss dug by four months of agony. Many things were lost in it, and he was beginning to ask himself whether it was the fact that he had seen M. Fauchelevent, a man so serious and so calm, at the barricade.

This was, however, not the sole stupor, which the appearances and disappearances of the past had left in his mind. We must not believe that he was delivered from all those promptings of memory which compel us, even when happy and satisfied, to take a melancholy backward glance. The head which does not turn to effaced horizons contains neither thought nor love. At moments Marius buried his face in his hands, and the tumultuous and vague past traversed the fog which he had in his brain. He saw Maboëuf fall again, he heard Gavroche singing under the grapeshot, and he felt on his lips the coldness of Eponine's forehead; Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Bossuet, Grantaire, all his friends rose before him, and then disappeared. Were all these dear, dolorous, valiant, charming, and tragic beings dreams? had they really existed? The riot had robed everything in its smoke, and these great fevers have great dreams. He questioned himself, he groped within himself, and had a dizziness from all these vanished realities. Where were they all, then? was it really true that everything was dead? a fall into the darkness had carried away everything, except himself; all this had disappeared as it were behind the curtain of a theatre. There are such curtains which drop on life, and God passes on to the next act. In himself was he really the same man? He, poor, was rich; he, the abandoned man, had a family; he, the desperate man, was going to



marry Cosette. It seemed to him that he had passed through a tomb, and that he had gone in black and come out white. And in this tomb the others had remained. At certain times all these beings of the past, returned and present, formed a circle round him, and rendered him gloomy. Then he thought of Cosette, and became serene again, but it required no less than this felicity to efface this catastrophe. M. Fauchelevent had almost a place among these vanished beings. Marius hesitated to believe that the Fauchelevent of the barricade was the same as that Fauchelevent in flesh and bone, so gravely seated by the side of Cosette. The first was probably one of those nightmares brought to him and carried away in his hours of delirium. However, as their two natures were scarped, it was impossible for Marius to ask any question of M. Fauchelevent. The idea had not even occurred to him. Two men who have a common secret, and who, by a sort of tacit agreement, do not exchange a syllable on the subject, are not so rare as may be supposed. Once, however, Marius made an effort; he turned the conversation on the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and turning to M. Fauchelevent, he said to him :

"Do you know that street well?"

"What street?"

"The Rue de la Chanvrerie."

"I have never heard the name of that street," M. Fauchelevent said in the most natural tone in the world.

The answer, which related to the name of the street, and not to the street itself, seemed to Marius more conclusive than it really was.

"Decidedly," he thought, "I must have been dreaming. I had an hallucination. It was some one who resembled him, and M. Fauchelevent was not there."

The enchantment, great though it was, did not efface other thoughts from Marius' mind. While the marriage arrangements were being made, and the fixed period was waited for, he made some difficult and scrupulous retrospective researches. He owed gratitude in several quarters, he owed it for his father, and he owed it for himself. There was Thénardier, and there was the stranger who had brought him back to M. Gillenormand's. Marius was anxious to find these two men again, as he did not wish to marry, be happy, and forget them, and feared lest these unpaid debts of honour might cast a shadow over his life,



which would henceforth be so luminous. It was impossible for him to leave all these arrears unsettled behind him, and he wished, ere he entered joyously into the future, to obtain a receipt from the past. That Thénardier was a villain took nothing from the fact that he had saved Colonel Pontmercy. Thénardier was a bandit for all the world excepting for Marius. And Marius, ignorant of the real scene on the battlefield of Waterloo, did not know this peculiarity, that his father stood to Thénardier in the strange situation of owing him life without owing him gratitude. Not one of the agents whom Marius employed could find Thénardier's trail, and the disappearance seemed complete on that side. Mother Thénardier had died in prison before trial, and Thénardier and his daughter Azelma, the only two left of this lamentable group, had plunged again into the shadow. The gulf of the social Unknown had silently closed again upon these beings.

Mother Thénardier being dead, Boulatruelle being out of the question, Claquesous having disappeared, and the principal accused having escaped from prison, the trial for the trap in the Gorbeau attic had pretty nearly failed. The affair had remained rather dark, and the assize court had been compelled to satisfy itself with two subalterns, Panchaud, *alias* Printanier, *alias* Bigrenaille, and Demi-Liard, *alias* Deux-milliards, who had been tried and condemned to the galleys for fourteen years. Penal servitude for life was passed against their accomplices who had escaped; Thénardier, as chief and promoter, was condemned to death, also in default. This condemnation was the only thing that remained of Thénardier, casting on this buried name its sinister gleam, like a candle by the side of a coffin. However, this condemnation, by thrusting Thénardier back into the lowest depths through the fear of being recaptured, added to the dense gloom which covered this man.

As for the other, the unknown man who had saved Marius, the researches had at first some result, and then stopped short. They succeeded in finding again the hackney-coach which had brought Marius to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire on the night of June 6. The driver declared that on the 6th June, by the order of a police agent, he had stopped from 3 p.m. till nightfall on the quay of the Champs Elysées, above the opening of the Grand Sewer, that at about nine in the evening the gate



of the sewer which looks upon the river-bank opened; that a man came out, bearing on his shoulders another man, who appeared to be dead; that the agent, who was watching at this point, had arrested the living man, and seized the dead man; that he, the coachman, had taken "all these people" into his hackney-coach; that they drove first to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, and deposited the dead man there; that the dead man was M. Marius, and that he, the coachman, recognised him thoroughly, though he was alive this time; that afterwards they got into his coach again, and a few yards from the gate of the Archives he was ordered to stop; that he was paid in the street and discharged, and that the agent took away the other man; that he knew nothing more, and that the night was very dark. Marius, as we said, remembered nothing. He merely remembered that he had been seized from behind by a powerful hand at the moment when he fell backwards from the barricade, and then all was effaced for him. He had only regained his senses when he was at M. Gillenormand's.

He lost himself in conjectures; he could not doubt as to his own identity, but how was it that he, who had fallen in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, had been picked up by the police agent on the bank of the Seine, near the bridge of the Invalides? Some one had brought him from the quarter of the markets to the Champs Elysées, and how? by the sewer? Extraordinary devotion! Some one; who? It was this man whom Marius was seeking. Of this man, who was his saviour, he could find nothing, not a trace, not the slightest sign. Marius, though compelled on this side to exercise a great reserve, pushed on his inquiries as far as the Prefecture of Police, but there the information which he obtained led to no better result than elsewhere. The Prefecture knew less about the matter than the driver of the hackney-coach; they had no knowledge of any arrest having taken place at the outlet of the great drain on June 6; they had received no report from the agent about this fact which, at the Prefecture, was regarded as a fable. The invention of this fable was attributed to the driver; for a driver anxious for drink-money is capable of anything, even imagination. The fact, however, was certain, and Marius could not doubt it, unless he doubted his own identity, as we have just said. Everything in this strange enigma was



inexplicable; this man, this mysterious man, whom the driver had seen come out of the grating of the great drain, bearing the fainting Marius on his back, and whom the police agent caught in the act of saving an insurgent,—what had become of him? what had become of the agent himself? why had this agent kept silence? had the man succeeded in escaping? had he corrupted the agent? why did this man give no sign of life to Marius, who owed everything to him? the disinterestedness was no less prodigious than the devotion. Why did this man not reappear? perhaps he was above reward, but no man is above gratitude. Was he dead? who was the man? what face had he? No one was able to say; the driver replied,—“The night was very dark.” Basque and Nicolette in their amazement had only looked at their young master, who was all bloody. The porter, whose candle had lit up Marius’ tragic arrival, had alone remarked the man in question, and this was the description he gave of him, “The man was horrible.”

In the hope of deriving some advantage from them for his researches, Marius kept the bloodstained clothes which he wore when he was brought to his grandfather’s. On examining the coat it was noticed that the skirt was strangely torn, and a piece was missing. One evening Marius was speaking in the presence of Cosette and Jean Valjean about all this singular adventure, the countless inquiries he had made, and the inutility of his efforts; Monsieur Fauchelevent’s cold face offended him, and he exclaimed with a vivacity which had almost the vibration of anger:

“Yes, that man, whoever he may be, was sublime. Do you know what he did, sir? He intervened like an archangel. He was obliged to throw himself into the midst of the contest, carry me away, open the sewer, drag me off, and carry me. He must have gone more than a league and a half through frightful subterranean galleries, bent and bowed in the darkness, in the sewer, for more than half a league, sir, with a corpse on his back! And for what object? for the sole object of saving that corpse, and that corpse was myself. He said to himself,—‘There is, perhaps, a gleam of life left here, and I will risk my existence for this wretched spark!’ and he did not risk his existence once, but twenty times! and each step was a danger, and the proof is, that on leaving the sewer, he was arrested. Do

you know, sir, that this man did all that? and he had no reward to expect. Who was I? An insurgent. Who was I? A conquered man. Oh! if Cosette's six hundred thousand francs were mine——"

"They are yours," Jean Valjean interrupted.

"Well, then," Marius continued, "I would give them to find that man."

Jean Valjean kept silence.

## CHAPTER CXIV.

THE night of the 16th of February, 1833, was a blessed night, for it had above its shadow the open sky. It was the wedding-night of Marius and Cosette. The day had been adorable; it was not the adorable blue feast dreamed of by the grandfather, a fairy scene, with a confusion of cherubims and cupids above the head of the married couple, a marriage worthy of being represented over a door; but it had been sweet and smiling. The fashion of marrying in 1833 was not at all as it is now. France had not yet borrowed from England that supreme delicacy of carrying off the wife, flying on leaving the church, hiding oneself as if ashamed of one's happiness, and combining the manœuvres of a bankrupt with the ravishment of the Song of Songs.

People still supposed at that epoch, whimsically enough, that a marriage is a private and social festival, that a patriarchal banquet does not spoil a domestic solemnity; that gaiety, even if it be excessive, so long as it is decent, does no harm to happiness; and, finally, that it is venerable and good for the fusion of these two destinies from which a family will issue, to begin in the house, and that the household may have in future the nuptial chamber as a witness. And people were so immodest as to marry at home. The wedding took place, then, according to this fashion which is now antiquated, at M. Gillenormand's; and though this affair of marrying is so simple and natural, the publication of the banns, the drawing up of the deeds, the mayoralty, and the church, always cause some complication. and they could not be ready before February 16th. Now—we note this detail for the pure satisfaction of being exact—it happened that the 16th was Shrove Tuesday. There were hesitations and scruples, especially on the part of Aunt Gillenormand.



"A Shrove Tuesday!" the grandfather exclaimed; "all the better. Done for the 16th. Do you wish to put it off, Marius?"

"Certainly not," said the amorous youth.

"We'll marry then," said the grandfather.

The marriage, therefore, took place on the 16th, in spite of the public gaiety. It rained on that day, but there is always in the sky a little blue patch at the service of happiness, which lovers see, even when the rest of creation are under their umbrellas. On the previous day, Jean Valjean had handed to Marius, in the presence of M. Gillenormand, the five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs. As the marriage took place in the ordinary way, the deeds were very simple. Toussaint was henceforth useless to Jean Valjean, so Cosette inherited her, and promoted her to the rank of lady's-maid. As for Jean Valjean, a nice room was furnished expressly for him at M. Gillenormand's, and Cosette had said to him so irresistibly,—"Father, I implore you," that she had almost made him promise that he would come and occupy it. A few days before that fixed for the marriage, an accident happened to Jean Valjean; he slightly injured the thumb of his right hand. It was not serious, and he had not allowed any one to poultice it, or even see it, not even Cosette. Still, it compelled him to wrap up his hand in a bandage and wear his arm in a sling, and this, of course, prevented him from signing anything. M. Gillenormand, as supervising guardian to Cosette, took his place. We will not take the reader either to the mayoralty or to church. Two lovers are not usually followed so far, and we are wont to turn our back on the drama, so soon as it puts a bridegroom's bouquet in its button-hole. We will restrict ourselves to noting an incident which, though unnoticed by the bridal party, marked the drive from the Rue des Filles du Calvaire to St. Paul's.

The Rue Saint Louis was being repaired at the time, and it was blocked from the Rue du Parc Royal, hence it was impossible for the carriage to go direct to St. Paul's. As they were obliged to change their course, the most simple plan was to turn into the boulevard. One of the guests drew attention to the fact that, as it was Shrove Tuesday, there would be a block of vehicles. "Why so?" M. Gillenormand asked. "On account of the masks." "Famous," said the grandfather; "we will go that way. These young



people are going to marry and see the serious side of life, and seeing the masquerade will be a slight preparation for it." They turned into the boulevard: the first of the wedding carriages contained Cosette and Aunt Gillenormand, M. Gillenormand and Jean Valjean. Marius, still separated from his bride, according to custom, was in the second. The nuptial procession, on turning out of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, joined the long file of vehicles making an endless chain from the Madeleine to the Bastille, and from the Bastille to the Madeleine. Masks were abundant on the boulevard: and though it rained every now and then, Pantaloon and Harlequin were obstinate. In the good humour of that winter of 1833 Paris had disguised itself as Venice. We do not see such Shrove Tuesdays nowadays, for as everything existing is a wide-spread carnival, there is no carnival left. The side-walks were thronged with pedestrians, and the windows with gazers; and the terraces crowning the peristyles of the theatres were covered with spectators. In addition to the masks, they beheld that file, peculiar to Shrove Tuesday as to Long-champs, of vehicles of every description, hackney-coaches, carts, curricles, and cabs, marching in order rigorously riveted to each other by police regulations, and, as it were, running on tramways. Any one who happens to be in one of these vehicles is at once spectator and spectacle. Policemen standing by the side of the boulevard kept in place these two interminable files moving in a contrary direction, and watched that nothing should impede the double current of these two streams, one running up, the other down, one towards the Chaussée d'Antin, the other towards the Faubourg St. Antoine. The escutcheoned carriages of the Peers of France and Ambassadors held the crown of the causeway, coming and going freely; and certain magnificent and gorgeous processions, notably the Bœuf gras, had the same privilege.

In the double file, along which Municipal Guards galloped like watch-dogs, honest family arks, crowded with great-aunts and grandmothers, displayed at windows healthy groups of disguised children, pierrots of seven, and pierrettes of six, ravishing little creatures, feeling that they officially formed part of the public merriment, penetrated with the dignity of their harlequinade, and displaying the gravity of functionaries. From time to time a block occurred somewhere in the procession of vehicles; one or other of the two



side files stopped until the knot was untied, and one impeded vehicle stopped the entire line. Then they started again. The wedding-carriages were in the file, going toward the Bastille on the right-hand side of the boulevard. Opposite the Rue du Pont aux Choux there was a stoppage, and almost at the same moment the file on the other side proceeding toward the Madeleine stopped too. At this point of the procession there was a carriage of masks. These carriages, or, to speak more correctly, these cart-loads of masks, are well known to the Parisians.

The tradition of the coaches of masks dates back to the oldest times of the monarchy. In our time, these noisy piles of creatures generally ride in some old van of which they encumber the roof, or cover with their tumultuous group a landau of which the hood is thrown back. You see them on the seat, on the front stool, on the springs of the hood, and on the pole, and they even straddle across the lamps. They are standing, lying down, or seated, cross-legged, or with pendent legs. The women occupy the knees of the men, and this wild pyramid is seen for a long distance over the heads of the crowd. These vehicles form mountains of merriment in the midst of the mob, and Collé, Panard, and Piron flow from them enriched with slang, and the fish-fag's catechism is expectorated from above upon the people.

Accident willed it, as we have just said, that one of the shapeless groups of masked men and women collected in a vast barouche stopped on the left of the boulevard, while the wedding-party stopped on the right. The carriage in which the masks were, noticed opposite to it the carriage in which was the bride.

"Hilloh!" said a mask, "a wedding."

"A false wedding," another retorted, "we are the true one."

And, as they were too far off to address the wedding-party, and as they also feared the interference of the police, the two masks looked elsewhere. The whole vehicle-load had plenty of work a moment after, for the mob began hissing it, which is the caress given by the mob to masquerades, and the two masks who had just spoken were obliged to face the crowd with their comrades, and found the projectiles from the Arsenal of the markets scarce sufficient to reply to the enormous barks of the people. A frightful exchange of metaphors took place between the

masks and the crowd. In the meanwhile, two other masks in the same carriage, a Spaniard with an exaggerated nose, an oldish look, and enormous black moustaches, and a thin and very youthful fish-girl, wearing a half mask, had noticed the wedding also, and while their companions and the spectators were insulting each other, held a conversation in a low voice. Their aside was covered by the tumult and was lost in it. The showers had drenched the open carriage; the February wind is not warm, and so the fish-girl, while answering the Spaniard, shivered, laughed, and coughed. This was the dialogue, which we translate from the original slang :

"Look here."

"What is it, pa?"

"Do you see that old man there, in the wedding-coach, with his arm in a sling?"

"Yes; what about him?"

"I feel sure that I know him."

"Ah!"

"May my neck be cut, if I do not know that Parisian. Can you see the bride by stooping?"

"No."

"And the bridegroom?"

"There is no bridegroom in that coach."

"Nonsense."

"Unless it be the other old man."

"Come, try and get a look at the bride by stooping."

"I can't."

"No matter, that old fellow who has something the matter with his paw, I feel certain I know him."

"And what good will it do you, your knowing him?"

"I don't know. Sometimes!"

"I don't care a curse for old fellows."

"I know him."

"Know him as much as you like."

"How the deuce is he at the wedding?"

"Why, we are there too."

"Where does the wedding come from?"

"How do I know?"

"Listen."

"Well, what is it?"

"You must do something."

"What is it?"

"Get out of our trap and follow that wedding."



"What to do?"

"To know where it goes and what it is. Make haste and get down; run, my daughter, for you are young."

"I can't leave the carriage."

"Why not?"

"I am hired."

"Oh, the devil!"

"I owe the Prefecture my day's work."

"That's true."

"If I leave the carriage, the first inspector who sees me will arrest me. You know that."

"Yes, I know it; but that old fellow bothers me."

"All old men bother you, and yet you ain't a chicken yourself."

"He is in the first carriage."

"Well, what then?"

"In the bride's carriage."

"What next?"

"So he is the father."

"How does that concern me?"

"I tell you he is the father."

"You do nothing but talk about that father."

"Listen."

"Well, what?"

"I can only go away masked, for I am hidden here, and no one knows I am here. But to-morrow there will be no masks, for it is Ash Wednesday, and I run a risk of being nailed. I shall be obliged to go back to my hole, but you are free."

"Not quite."

"Well, more so than I am."

"Well, what then?"

"You must try and find out for me what that wedding is, and where it comes from."

"Of course! that would be funny. It's so mighty easy to find out a week after where a wedding-party has gone to that passed on Shrove Tuesday. A pin in a bundle of hay. Is it possible?"

"No matter, you must try. Do you hear, Azelma?"

The two files recommenced their opposite movement on the boulevard, and the carriage of masks lost out of sight that which contained the bride.

To realise one's dream—to whom is this granted? There must be elections for this in heaven; we are the unconscious

candidates, and the angels vote. Cosette and Marius had been elected. Cosette, both at the mayoralty and at church, was brilliant and touching. Toussaint, helped by Nicolette, had dressed her. Cosette wore over a skirt of white taffetas her dress of Binche lace, a veil of English point, a necklace of fine pearls, and a crown of orange flowers; all this was white, and in this whiteness she was radiant. It was an exquisite candour expanding and becoming transfigured in light; she looked like a virgin on the point of becoming a goddess. Marius' fine hair was shining and perfumed, and here and there a glimpse could be caught, under the thick curls, of pale lines, which were the scars of the barricade. The grandfather, superb, with head erect, amalgamating in his toilet and manners all the elegances of the time of Barras, gave his arm to Cosette. He took the place of Jean Valjean, who, owing to his wound, could not give his hand to the bride. Jean Valjean, dressed all in black, followed and smiled.

"Monsieur Fauchelevent," the grandfather said to him, "this is a glorious day, and I vote the end of afflictions and cares. Henceforth there must be no sorrow anywhere. By Heaven! I decree joy! misfortune has no right to exist, and it is a disgrace for the azure of heaven that there are unfortunate men. Evil does not come from man, who, at the bottom, is good; but all human miseries have their capital and central government in hell, otherwise called the Tuileries of the devil. There, I am making demagogic remarks at present! For my part I have no political opinions left; and all I stick to is that all men should be rich, that is to say, joyous."

When, at the end of all the ceremonies,—after pronouncing before the mayor and before the priest every possible yes, after signing the register at the municipality and in the sacristy, after exchanging rings, after kneeling side by side under the canopy of white moire in the smoke of the censer,—they arrived holding each other by the hand, admired and envied by all. Marius in black, she in white, preceded by the beadle in colonel's epaulettes, striking the flagstones with his halberd, between two rows of dazzled spectators, at the church doors which were thrown wide open, ready to get into their carriage,—and then all was over. Cosette could not yet believe it. She looked at Marius, she looked at the crowd, she looked at heaven; it seemed as if she were afraid of awaking. Her astonished and anxious air imparted something strangely enchanting to her. In



returning they both rode in the same carriage, Marius seated by Cosette's side, and M. Gillenormand and Jean Valjean forming their vis-à-vis. Aunt Gillenormand had fallen back a step and was in the second carriage. "My children," the grandfather said, "you are now M. le Baron and Madame la Baronne, with thirty thousand francs a year." And Cosette, leaning close up to Marius, caressed his ear with the angelic whisper, "It is true, then, my name is Marius, and I am Madame Thou." These two beings were resplendent, they had reached the irrevocable and irrecoverable moment, the dazzling point of intersection of all youth and all joy. They said to each other in a whisper, "We will go and see again our little garden in the Rue Plumet." They realised Jean Prouvaire's views; together they did not count forty years. It was marriage sublimated; and these two children were two lilies. They did not see each other, but contemplated each other. Cosette perceived Marius in a glory, and Marius perceived Cosette upon an altar. And upon this altar, and in this glory, the two apotheoses blending, behind a cloud for Cosette, in flashing flame for Marius, there was the ideal thing, the real thing, the meeting-place of kisses and of sleep, the nuptial pillow.

The delight of these two hearts overflowed upon the crowd, and imparted merriment to the passers-by. People stopped in the Rue St. Antoine, in front of St. Paul's, to look through the carriage-window—the orange flowers trembling on Cosette's head. Then they returned to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire—home. Marius, side by side with Cosette, ascended, triumphantly and radiantly, that staircase up which he had been dragged in a dying state. The beggars, collected before the gate and dividing the contents of their purses, blessed them. There were flowers everywhere, and the house was no less fragrant than the church: after the incense, the rose. They fancied they could hear voices singing in infinitude; they had God in their hearts; destiny appeared to them like a ceiling of stars; they saw above their heads the flashing of the rising sun. Marius gazed at Cosette's charming bare arm and the pink things which could be vaguely seen through the lace of her stomacher, and Cosette, catching Marius' glance, blushed to the tips of her ears. A good many old friends of the Gillenormand family had been invited, and they thronged round Cosette, outvying each other in calling her *Madame la Baronne*.



Cosette had never been more affectionate to Jean Valjean, and she was in unison with Father Gillenormand; while he built up joy in aphorisms and maxims, she exhaled love and beauty like a perfume. Happiness wishes everybody to be happy. In talking to Jean Valjean she formed inflections of her voice of the time when she was a little girl, and caressed him with a smile. A banquet had been prepared in the dining-room; an illumination *à giorno* is the necessary seasoning of a great joy; mist and darkness are not accepted by the happy. They do not consent to be black; night, yes; darkness, no; and if there be no sun, one must be made. The dining-room was a furnace of gay things; in the centre, above the white glistening tables, hung a Venetian chandelier, with all sorts of coloured birds, blue, violet, red, and green, perched among the candles; round the chandelier were girandoles, and on the walls were mirrors with three and four branches; glasses, crystal, plate, china, crockery, gold, and silver, all flashed and rejoiced. The spaces between the candelabra were filled up with bouquets, so that where there was not a light there was a flower. In the anteroom three violins and a flute played some of Haydn's quartettes. Jean Valjean had seated himself on a chair in the drawing-room, behind the door, which, being thrown back, almost concealed him. A few minutes before they sat down to table Cosette gave him a deep curtsy, while spreading out her wedding-dress with both hands, and with a tenderly mocking look, asked him:

"Father, are you satisfied?"

"Yes," said Jean Valjean, "I am satisfied."

"Well, then, laugh."

Jean Valjean began laughing. A few minutes later Basque came in to announce that dinner was on the table. The guests, preceded by M. Gillenormand, who gave his arm to Cosette, entered the dining-room, and collected round the table in the prescribed order. There was a large easy-chair on either side of the bride, one for M. Gillenormand, the other for Jean Valjean. M. Gillenormand seated himself, but the other chair remained empty. All looked round for "Monsieur Fauchelevent," but he was no longer there, and M. Gillenormand hailed Basque.

"Do you know where M. Fauchelevent is?"

"Yes, sir, I do," Basque replied. "Monsieur Fauchelevent requested me to tell you, sir, that his hand pained him, and that he could not dine with M. le Baron and



**Madame la Baronne.** He therefore begged to be excused, but would call to-morrow. He has just left."

This empty chair momentarily chilled the effusion of the wedding feast; but though M. Fauchelevent was absent M. Gillenormand was there, and the grandfather shone for two. He declared that M. Fauchelevent acted rightly in going to bed early if he were in pain, but that it was only a small hurt. This declaration was sufficient; besides, what is a dark corner in such a submersion of joy? Cosette and Marius were in one of those egotistic and blessed moments when people possess no other faculty than that of perceiving joy; and then M. Gillenormand had an idea, "By Jupiter, this chair is empty; come hither, Marius; your aunt, though she has a right to it, will permit you; this chair is for you; it is legal, and it is pretty—Fortunatus by the side of Fortunata." The whole of the guests applauded. Marius took Jean Valjean's place by Cosette's side, and things were so arranged that Cosette, who had at first been saddened by the absence of Jean Valjean, ended by being pleased at it. From the moment when Marius was the substitute Cosette would not have regretted God. She placed her little white satin-slipped foot upon Marius' foot. When the easy-chair was occupied M. Fauchelevent was effaced, and nothing was wanting. And five minutes later all the guests were laughing from one end of the table to the other, with all the forgetfulness of humour. At dessert M. Gillenormand rose, with a glass of champagne in his hand, only half full, so that the trembling of ninety-two years might not upset it, and proposed the health of the new-married couple.

The evening was lively, gay, and pleasant; the sovereign good humour of the grandfather gave the tone to the whole festivity, and each was regulated by this almost centenarian cordiality. There was a little dancing, and a good deal of laughter; it was a merry wedding, to which that worthy old fellow "Once on a time" might have been invited; however, he was present in the person of Father Gillenormand. There was a tumult, and then a silence; the married couple disappeared. A little after midnight the Gillenormand mansion became a temple. Here we stop, for an angel stands on the threshold of wedding-nights, smiling, and with finger on lip; the mind becomes contemplative before this sanctuary in which the celebration of love is held. There must be rays of light above such



houses, and the joy which they contain must pass through the walls in brilliancy, and vaguely irradiate the darkness. It is impossible for this sacred and fatal festival not to send a celestial radiance to infinitude. Love is the sublime crucible in which the fusion of man and woman takes place ; the one being, the triple being, the final being, the human trinity issue from it. This birth of two souls in one must have emotion for the shadows. The lover is the priest, and the transported virgin feels an awe. A portion of this joy ascends to God. When there is really marriage, that is to say, when there is love, the ideal is mingled with it, and a nuptial couch forms in the darkness a corner of the dawn. If it was given to the mental eye to perceive the formidable and charming visions of higher life, it is probable that it would see the forms of night, the unknown winged beings, the blue wayfarers of the invisible, bending down round the luminous house, satisfied and blessing, pointing out to each other the virgin bride, who is gently startled, and having the reflection of human felicity on their divine countenances. If, at this supreme hour, the pair, dazzled with pleasure, and who believe themselves alone, were to listen, they would hear in their chamber a confused rustling of wings, for perfect happiness implies the guarantee of angels. This little obscure alcove has an entire heaven for its ceiling. When two mouths, which have become sacred by love, approach each other in order to create, it is impossible but that there is a tremor in the immense mystery of the stars above this ineffable kiss. These felicities are the real ones, there is no joy beyond their joys, love is the sole ecstasy, and all the rest weeps. To love or to have loved is sufficient ; ask nothing more after that. There is no other pearl to be found in the dark folds of life, for love is a consummation.

## CHAPTER CXV.

WHAT had become of Jean Valjean ? Directly after he had laughed, in accordance with Cosette's request, as no one was paying any attention to him, Jean Valjean rose, and, unnoticed, reached the anteroom. It was the same room which he had entered eight months previously, black with mud, blood, and gunpowder, bringing back the grandson to the grandfather. The old panelling was garlanded with



flowers and leaves, the musicians were seated on the sofa upon which Marius had been deposited. Basque, in black coat, knee-breeches, white cravat, and white gloves, was placing wreaths of roses round each of the dishes which was going to be served up. Jean Valjean showed him his arm in the sling, requested him to explain his absence, and quitted the house. The windows of the dining-room looked out on the street, and Jean Valjean stood for some minutes motionless in the obscurity of those radiant windows. He listened, and the confused sound of the banquet reached his ears; he heard the grandfather's loud and dictatorial voice, the violins, the rattling of plates and glasses, the bursts of laughter, and in all this gay uproar he distinguished Cosette's soft, happy voice. He left the Rue des Filles du Calvaire and returned to the Rue de l'Homme Armé. In going home he went along the Rue Saint Louis, the Rue Culture Sainte Catherine, and the Blancs Manteaux; it was a little longer, but it was the road by which he had been accustomed to come with Cosette during the last three months, in order to avoid the crowd and mud of the Rue Vieille du Temple. This road, which Cosette had passed along, excluded the idea of any other itinerary for him. Jean Valjean returned home, lit his candle, and went upstairs. The apartments were empty, and not even Toussaint was in there now. Jean Valjean's footsteps made more noise in the rooms than usual. All the wardrobes were open; he entered Cosette's room, and there were no sheets on the bed. The pillow, without a case or lace, was laid on the blankets folded at the foot of the bed, in which no one was going to sleep again. All the small feminine articles to which Cosette clung had been removed; only the heavy furniture and the four walls remained. Toussaint's bed was also unmade; and the only one made, which seemed to be expecting somebody, was Jean Valjean's. Jean Valjean looked at the walls, closed some of the wardrobe drawers, and walked in and out of the rooms. Then he returned to his own room and placed his candle on the table; he had taken his arm out of the sling, and used it as if he were suffering no pain in it. He went up to his bed, and his eyes fell—was it by accident or was it purposely?—on the "inseparable," of which Cosette had been jealous, the little valise which never left him. On June 4th, when he arrived at the Rue de l'Homme Armé, he had laid it on a table; he now walked up to this



table with some eagerness, took the key out of his pocket, and opened the portmanteau. He slowly drew out the clothes in which, ten years previously, Cosette had left Montfermeil; first the little black dress, then the black handkerchief, then the stout shoes, which Cosette could almost have worn still, so small was her foot; next the petticoat, then the apron, and, lastly, the woollen stockings. These stockings, in which the shape of a little leg was gracefully marked, were no longer than Jean Valjean's hand. All these articles were black, and it was he who took them for her to Montfermeil. He laid each article on the bed as he took it out, and he thought, and remembered. It was in winter, a very cold December, she was shivering under her rags, and her poor feet were quite red in her wooden shoes. He, Jean Valjean, had made her take off these rags, and put on this mourning garb; the mother must have been pleased in her tomb to see her daughter wearing mourning for her, and above all to see that she was well clothed and was warm. He thought of that forest of Montfermeil, he thought of the weather it was, of the trees without leaves, of the wood without birds, and the sky without sun; but no matter, it was charming. He arranged the little clothes on the bed, the handkerchief near the petticoat, the stockings along with the shoes, the apron by the side of the dress, and he looked at them one after the other. She was not much taller than that, she had her large doll in her arms, she had put her louis d'or in the pocket of this apron, she laughed, they walked along holding each other's hand, and she had no one but him in the world.

Then his venerable white head fell on the bed, his old stoical heart broke, his face was buried in Cosette's clothes, and had any one passed upstairs at that moment he would have heard frightful sobs. The old formidable struggle, of which we have already seen several phases, began again. Jacob only wrestled with the angel for one night. Alas! how many times have we seen Jean Valjean caught round the waist in the darkness by his conscience, and struggling frantically against it. An extraordinary struggle! at certain moments the foot slips, at others, the ground gives way. How many times had that conscience, clinging to the right, strangled and crushed him! how many times had inexorable truth set its foot on his chest! how many times had he, felled by the light, cried for mercy! how many times had that implacable light, illumined within and over him by the



Bishop, dazzled him when he wished to be blinded ! how many times had he risen again in the contest, clung to the rock, supported himself by sophistry, and been dragged through the dust, at one moment throwing his conscience under him, at another thrown by it ! how many times, after an equivocation, after the treacherous and specious reasoning of egotism, had he heard his irritated conscience cry in his ears, "Tripper ! scoundrel !" how many times had his refractory thoughts groaned convulsively under the evidence of duty ! what secret wounds he had, which he alone felt bleeding ! what excoriations there were in his lamentable existence ! how many times had he risen, bleeding, mutilated, crushed, enlightened, with despair in his heart and serenity in his soul ! and though vanquished, he felt himself the victor, and after having dislocated, tortured, and broken him, his conscience, erect before him, luminous and tranquil, would say to him,—"Now go in peace !" What a mournful peace, alas ! after issuing from such a contest.

This night, however, Jean Valjean felt that he was fighting his last battle. A crushing question presented itself ; predestinations are not all straight, they do not develop themselves in a rectilinear avenue before the predestined man ; they have blind alleys, zigzags, awkward corners, and perplexing cross-roads. Jean Valjean was halting at this moment at the most dangerous of these cross-roads. He had reached the supreme crossing of good and evil, and had that gloomy intersection before his eyes. This time again, as had already happened in other painful interludes, two roads presented themselves before him, one tempting, the other terrifying ; which should he take ? The one which frightened him was counselled by the mysterious pointing hand, which we all perceive every time that we fix our eyes upon the darkness. Jean Valjean had once again a choice between the terrible haven and the smiling snare. Is it true, then ? the soul may be cured, but not destiny. What a frightful thing ! an incurable destiny ! The question which presented itself was this,—In what way was Jean Valjean going to behave in regard to the happiness of Cosette and Marius ? That happiness he had willed, he had made ; and at this hour, in gazing upon it, he could have the species of satisfaction which a cutler would have who recognised his trade-mark upon a knife, when he drew it all reeking from his chest. Cosette had Marius, Marius possessed Cosette ; they possessed



everything, even wealth, and it was his doing. But, now that this happiness existed and was there, how was he, Jean Valjean, to treat it? should he force himself upon it and treat it as if belonging to himself? Doubtless, Cosette was another man's; but should he, Jean Valjean, retain of Cosette all that he could retain? Should he remain the sort of father, scarce seen but respected, which he had hitherto been? should he introduce himself quietly into Cosette's house? should he carry his past to this future without saying a word? should he present himself there as one having a right, and should he sit down, veiled, at this luminous hearth? Should he smilingly take the hands of these two innocent creatures in his tragic hands? should he place on the andirons of the Gillenormand drawing-room his feet which dragged after them the degrading shadow of the law? Should he render the obscurity on his brow and the cloud on theirs denser? should he join his catastrophe to their two felicities? should he continue to be silent? in a word, should he be the sinister dumb man of destiny by the side of these two happy beings? We must be accustomed to fatality and to meeting it, to raise our eyes when certain questions appear to us in their terrible nudity. Good and evil are behind this stern note of interrogation. What are you going to do? the sphynx asks. This habit of trial Jean Valjean had, and he looked at the sphynx fixedly, and examined the pitiless problem from all sides. Cosette, that charming existence, was the raft of this shipwrecked man; what should he do, cling to it, or let it go? If he clung to it, he issued from disaster, he remounted to the sunshine, he let the bitter water drip off his clothes and hair, he was saved and lived. Suppose he let it go? then there was an abyss. He thus dolorously held counsel with his thoughts, or, to speak more correctly, he combated; he rushed furiously within himself, at one moment against his will, at another against his convictions. It was fortunate for Jean Valjean that he had been able to weep, for that enlightened him, perhaps. Still, the beginning was stern; a tempest, more furious than that which had formerly forced him to Arras, was let loose within him. The past returned to him in the face of the present; he compared and he sobbed. Once the sluice of tears was opened, the despairing man writhed. He felt himself arrested, alas! in the deadly fight between one egotism and one duty. When we thus recoil inch by inch before our



ideal, wildly, obstinately, exasperated at yielding, disputing the ground, hoping for a possible flight, and seeking an issue, what a sudden and sinister resistance is the foot of a wall behind us ! to feel the sacred shadow forming an obstacle !

Hence we have never finished with our conscience. The first step is nothing, it is the last that is difficult. What was the Champmathieu affair by the side of Cosette's marriage,? what did it bring with it ? what is returning to the hulks by the side of entering nothingness ? Oh, first step to descend, how gloomy thou art ! oh, second step, how black thou art ! How could he help turning his head away this time ? Martyrdom is a sublimation, a corrosive sublimation. It is a torture which consecrates. A man may consent to it for the first hour ; he sits on the throne of red-hot iron, the crown of red-hot iron is placed on his head, he accepts the red-hot globe, he takes the red-hot sceptre, but he still has to don the mantle of flame, and is there not a moment when the miserable flesh revolts and the punishment is fled from ? At length Jean Valjean entered the calmness of prostration, he wished, thought over, and considered the alternatives of the mysterious balance of light and shadow. Should he force his galleys on these two dazzling children, or consummate his own irremediable destruction ? On one side was the sacrifice of Cosette, on the other of himself.

His confusing reverie lasted all night ; he remained till daybreak in the same position, leaning over the bed, prostrate beneath the enormity of fate, crushed perhaps, alas ! with clenched fists, and arms extended at a right angle like an unnailed crucified man thrown with his face on the ground. He remained thus for twelve hours, the twelve hours of a long winter's night, frozen, without raising his head or uttering a syllable. He was motionless as a corpse, while his thoughts rolled on the ground or fled away. Sometimes like the hydra, sometimes like the eagle. To see him thus you would have thought him a dead man ; but all at once he started convulsively, and his mouth pressed to Cosette's clothes, kissed them ; then you could see that he was alive.

## CHAPTER CXVI.

THE day after a wedding is solitary, for people respect the retirement of the happy, and to some extent their lengthened slumbers. The confusion of visits and congratulations does not begin again till a later date. On the morning of February 17 it was a little past midday when Basque, with napkin and feather-brush under his arm, was dusting the anteroom, when he heard a low tap at the door. There had not been a ring, which is discreet on such a day. Basque opened and saw M. Fauchelevent; he conducted him to the drawing-room, which was still in great confusion, and looked like the battlefield of the previous day's joys.

"Really, sir," observed Basque, "we woke late."

"Is your master up?" Jean Valjean asked.

"How is your hand, sir?" Basque replied.

"Better. Is your master up?"

"Which one? the old or the new?"

"Monsieur Pontmercy."

"Monsieur le Baron!" said Basque, drawing himself up.

A baron is above all a baron to his servants; a portion of it comes to them, and they have what a philosopher would call the splashing of the title, and that flatters them. Marius, we may mention in passing, a militant republican as he had proved, was now a baron, in spite of himself. A little revolution had taken place in the family with reference to this title; at present it was M. Gillenormand who was attached to it, and Marius who threw it off. But Colonel Pontmercy had written, "My son will bear my title," and Marius obeyed. And then Cosette, in whom the woman was beginning to germinate, was delighted at being a baroness.

"Monsieur le Baron?" repeated Basque, "I will go and see. I will tell him that Monsieur Fauchelevent is here."

"No, do not tell him it is I. Tell him that some one wishes to speak to him privately, and do not mention my name."

"Ah!" said Basque.

"I wish to surprise him."

"Ah!" Basque repeated, giving himself his second "Ah!" as an explanation of the first.

And he left the room. Jean Valjean remained alone. A



few moments passed, during which Jean Valjean remained motionless at the spot where Basque left him. His eyes were hollow, and so sunk in their sockets by sleeplessness that they almost disappeared. His black coat displayed the fatigued creases of a coat which has been up all night, and the elbows were white with that down which friction with linen leaves on cloth. There was a noise at the door, and he raised his eyes. Marius came in with head erect, laughing mouth, a peculiar light over his face, a smooth forehead, and a flashing eye. He also had not slept.

"It is you, father!" he exclaimed, on perceiving Jean Valjean; "why, that ass Basque affected the mysterious. But you have come too early. It is only half-past twelve, and Cosette is asleep."

That word, father, addressed to M. Fauchelevent by Marius, signified supreme felicity. There had always been, as we know, an escarpment, a coldness, and constraint between them; ice to melt or break. Marius was so intoxicated that the escarpment sank, the ice dissolved, and M. Fauchelevent was for him, as for Cosette, a father. He continued; the words overflowed with him, which is peculiar to these divine paroxysms of joy,—

"How delighted I am to see you! if you only knew how we missed you yesterday! Good-day, father; how is your hand? better, is it not?"

And, satisfied with the favourable answer which he gave himself, he went on:

"We both spoke about you, for Cosette loves you so dearly. You will not forget that you have a room here, for we will not hear a word about the Rue de l'Homme Armé. I do not know how you were able to live in that street, which is sick, and mean, and poor, which has a barrier at one end, where you feel cold, and which no one can enter! You will come and install yourself here, and from to-day, or else you will have to settle with Cosette. She intends to lead us both by the nose, I warn you. You have seen your room, it is close to ours, and looks out on the gardens: we have had the lock mended, the bed is made, it is all ready, and you have only to move in. Cosette has placed close to your bed a large old easy-chair of Utrecht velvet, to which she said, 'Hold out your arms to him!' Every spring a nightingale comes to the clump of acacias which faces your windows, and you will have it in two months. You will have its nest on your left and ours on your right; at night

it will sing, and by day Cosette will talk. Your room faces due south; Cosette will arrange your books in it, and all your matters. There is, I believe, a valise to which you are attached, and I have arranged a corner of honour for it. You have won my grandfather, for you suit him: we will live together. Do you know whist? you will overwhelm my grandfather if you are acquainted with whist. You will take Cosette for a walk on the day when I go to the Courts; you will give her your arm, as you used to do, you remember, formerly at the Luxembourg. We are absolutely determined to be very happy, and you will share in our happiness, do you hear, papa? By the bye, you will breakfast with us this morning?"

"I have one thing to remark to you, sir," said Jean Valjean; "I am an ex-convict."

The limit of the perceptible acute sounds may be as well exceeded for the mind as for the ear. These words, "I am an ex-convict," coming from M. Fauchelevent's mouth and entering Marius' ear went beyond possibility. Marius did not hear; it seemed to him as if something had just been said to him, but he knew not what. He stood with gaping mouth. Jean Valjean unfastened the black handkerchief that supported his right arm, undid the linen rolled round his hand, bared his thumb, and showed it to Marius.

"I have nothing the matter with my hand," he said.

Marius looked at the thumb.

"There was never anything the matter with it," Jean Valjean added.

There was, in fact, no sign of a wound. Jean Valjean continued:

"It was proper that I should be absent from your marriage, and I was so as far as I could. I feigned this wound in order not to commit a forgery, and render the marriage-deeds null and void."

Marius stammered:

"What does this mean?"

"It means," Jean Valjean replied, "that I have been to the galleys."

"You are driving me mad," said the horrified Marius.

"Monsieur Pontmercy," said Jean Valjean, "I was nineteen years at the galleys for robbery. Then I was sentenced to them for life, for robbery, and a second offence. At the present moment I am an escaped convict."

Although Marius recoiled before the reality, refused the



facts, and resisted the evidence, he was obliged to yield to it. He was beginning to understand, and as always happens in such a case, he understood too much. He had the shudder of a hideous internal flash: and an idea that made him shudder crossed his mind. He foresaw a frightful destiny for himself in the future.

"Say all, say all," he exclaimed, "you are Cosette's father!"

And he fell back two steps, with a movement of indescribable horror. Jean Valjean threw up his head with such a majestic attitude that he seemed to rise to the ceiling.

"It is necessary that you should believe me here, sir, although the oath of men like us is not taken in a court of justice——"

Here there was a silence, and then, with a sort of sovereign and sepulchral authority, he added, speaking slowly and laying a stress on the syllables:

"You will believe me. I, Cosette's father! Before Heaven, no, Monsieur le Baron Pontmercy. I am a peasant of Faverolles, and earned my livelihood by pruning trees. My name is not Fauchelevent, but Jean Valjean. I am nothing to Cosette, so reassure yourself."

Marius stammered:

"Who proves it to me?"

"I do, since I say it."

Marius looked at this man: he was mournful and calm, and no falsehood could issue from such calmness. What is frozen is sincere, and the truth could be felt in this coldness of the tomb.

"I do believe you," said Marius.

Jean Valjean bowed his head, as if to note the fact, and continued:

"What am I to Cosette? a passer-by. Ten years ago I did not know that she existed. I love her, it is true, for men love a child whom they have seen little when old themselves; when a man is old he feels like a grandfather to all little children. You can, I suppose, imagine that I have something which resembles a heart. She was an orphan, without father or mother, and needed me, and that is why I came to love her. Children are so weak that the first comer, even a man like myself, may be their protector. I performed this duty to Cosette. I cannot suppose that so small a thing can be called a good action: but if it be one, well, assume that I had done it. Record

that extenuating fact. To-day Cosette leaves my life, and our two roads separate. Henceforth I can do no more for her; she is Madame Pontmercy; her providence has changed, and she has gained by the change, so all is well. As for the six hundred thousand francs, you say nothing of them, but I will meet your thought half-way: they are a deposit. How was it placed in my hands? no matter. I give up the deposit, and there is nothing more to ask of me. I complete the restitution by stating my real name, and this too concerns myself, for I am anxious that you should know who I am."

And Jean Valjean looked Marius in the face. All that Marius experienced was tumultuous and incoherent, for certain blasts of the wind of destiny produce such waves in our soul. We have all had such moments of trouble in which everything is dispersed within us: we say the first things that occur to us, which are not always precisely those which we ought to say. There are sudden revelations which we cannot bear, and which intoxicate like a potent wine. Marius was stupefied by the new situation which appeared to him, and spoke to this man almost as if he were angry at the avowal.

"But why," he exclaimed, "do you tell me all this? who forces you to do so? you might have kept your secret to yourself. You are neither denounced, nor pursued, nor tracked. You have a motive for making the revelation so voluntarily. Continue; there is something else; for what purpose do you make this confession? for what motive?"

"For what motive?" Jean Valjean answered in a voice so low and dull that it seemed as if he were speaking to himself rather than Marius. "For what motive? in truth, does this convict come here to say, I am a convict. Well, yes, the motive is a strange one: it is through honesty. The misfortune is that I have a thread in my heart which holds me fast, and it is especially when a man is old that these threads are most solid. The whole of life is undone around, but they resist. Had I been enabled to tear away that thread, break it, unfasten or cut the knot, and go a long way off, I would be saved and needed only to start. There are diligences in the Rue du Bouloy; you are happy, and I am off. I tried to break that thread. I pulled at it, it held out, it did not break, and I pulled out my heart with it. Then I said, I cannot live anywhere else, and must remain.



Well, yes, but you are right. I am an ass ; why not simply remain ? You offer me a bedroom in the house. Madame Pontmercy loves me dearly ; your grandfather asks nothing better than to have me. I suit him, we will all live together, have our meals in common, I will give my arm to Cosette, to Madame Pontmercy, forgive me, but it is habit, we will have only one roof, one table, one fire, the same chimney-corner in winter, the same walk in summer : that is joy, that is happiness, that is everything. We will live in one family."

At this word, Jean Valjean became fierce. He folded his arms, looked at the board at his feet, as if he wished to dig a pit in it, and his voice suddenly became loud.

"In one family ? no. I belong to no family ; I do not belong to yours ; I do not even belong to the human family. In houses where people are together, I am in the way. There are families ; but none for me. I am the unhappy man ; I am outside. Had I a father and mother ? I almost doubt it. On the day when I gave you that child in marriage, it was all ended. I saw that she was happy, and that she was with the man she loved, that there is a kind old gentleman here, a household of two angels, and every joy in this house, and I said to myself, Do not enter. I could lie, it is true ; deceive you all, and remain Monsieur Fauchelevent. So long as it was for her, I was able to lie, but now that it would be but for myself I ought not to do so. I only required to be silent, it is true, and all would have gone on. You ask me what compels me to speak ? a strange sort of thing, my conscience. It would have been very easy, however, to hold my tongue ; I spent the night in trying to persuade myself into it. You are shriving me, and what I have just told you is so extraordinary that you have the right to do so. Well, yes, I spent the night in giving myself reasons. I gave myself excellent reasons ; I did what I could. But there are two things in which I could not succeed ; I could neither break the string which holds me by the heart, fixed, sealed, and riveted here, nor silence some one who speaks to me in a low voice when I am alone. That is why I have come to confess all to you this morning,—all, or nearly all, for it is useless to tell what only concerns myself, and that I keep to myself. You know the essential thing. I took my mystery, then, and brought it to you, and ripped it up before your eyes. It was not an easy resolution to form, and I debated the point



the whole night. Ah ! you may fancy that I did not say to myself that this was not the Champmathieu affair, that in hiding my name I did no one any harm, that the name of Fauchelevent was given me by Fauchelevent himself in gratitude for a service rendered, and that I might fairly keep it, and that I should be happy in this room which you offer me, that I should not be at all in the way, that I should be in my little corner, and that while you had Cosette I should have the idea of being in the same house with her ; each would have his proportioned happiness. Continuing to be Monsieur Fauchelevent arranged everything. Yes, except my soul ; there would be joy all over me, but the bottom of my soul would remain black. Thus I should have remained Monsieur Fauchelevent. I should have hidden my real face in the presence of your happiness, I should have borne an enigma ; and in the midst of your broad sunshine, I should have been darkness ; thus, without crying beware, I should have introduced the hulks to your hearth, I should have sat down at your table with the thought that, if you knew who I was, you would expel me ; and let myself be served by the servants, who, had they known, would have said, ' What a horror ! ' I should have touched you with my elbow, which you have a right to feel offended at, and swindled you out of shakes of the hand. There would have been in your house a divided respect between venerable gray hairs and branded gray hairs ; in your most intimate hours, when all hearts formed themselves to each other, when we were all four together, the grandfather, you two, and I, there would have been a stranger there. Hence I, a dead man, would have imposed myself on you who are living, and I should have sentenced her for life. You, Cosette, and I would have been three heads in the green cap ! Do you not shudder ? I am only the most crushed of men ; I should have been the most monstrous. And this crime I should have committed daily ! and this falsehood I should have told daily ! and this face of night I should have worn daily ! and I should have given to you a share in my stigma daily, to you, my beloved, to you, my children, to you, my innocents. Holding one's tongue is nothing ? keeping silence is simple ? no, it is not simple, for there is a silence which lies, and my falsehood, and my fraud, and my indignity, and my cowardice, and my treachery, and my crime, I should have drunk drop by drop ; I should have spat it out, and thus drunk it again ; I



should have ended at midnight and begun again at midday, and my good-day would have lied, and my good-night would have lied, and I should have slept upon it, and eaten it with my bread; and I should have looked at Cosette, and responded to the smile of the angel with the smile of the condemned man, and I should have been an abominable scoundrel, and for what purpose? to be happy. I happy! have I the right to be happy? I am out of life, sir."

Jean Valjean stopped, and Marius listened, but such enchainments of ideas and agonies cannot be interrupted. Jean Valjean lowered his voice again, but it was no longer the dull voice, but the sinister voice.

"You ask why I speak? I am neither denounced, nor pursued, nor tracked, you say. Yes, I am denounced! Yes, I am pursued! Yes, I am tracked! By whom? by myself. It is I who bar my own passage, and I drag myself along, and I push myself, and I arrest myself, and execute myself, and when a man holds himself he is securely held."

And, seizing his own collar, and dragging it toward Marius, he continued:

"Look at this fist. Do you not think that it holds this collar so as not to let it go? Well, conscience is a very different hand! If you wish to be happy, sir, you must never understand duty; for so soon as you have understood it, it is implacable. People may say that it punishes you for understanding it; but no, it rewards you for it, for it places you in a hell where you feel God by your side. A man has no sooner torn his entrails than he is at peace with himself."

And, with an indescribable accent, he added:

"Monsieur Pontmercy, this is not common sense. I am an honest man. It is by degrading myself in your eyes that I raise myself in my own. This has happened to me once before, but it was less painful; it was nothing. Yes, an honest man. I should not be one if you had, through my fault, continued to esteem me; but now that you despise me, I am so. I have this fatality upon me, that as I am never able to have any but stolen consideration, this consideration humiliates and crushes me internally, and in order that I may respect myself, people must despise me. Then I draw myself up. I am a galley-slave who obeys his conscience. I know very well that this is not likely, but what would



you have me do? it is so. I have made engagements with myself, and keep them. There are meetings which bind us. There are accidents which drag us into duty. Look you, Monsieur Pontmercy, things have happened to me in my life."

Jean Valjean made another pause, swallowing his saliva with an effort, as if his words had a bitter after-taste, and he continued :

"When a man has such a horror upon him, he has no right to make others share it unconsciously ; he has no right to communicate his plague to them ; he has no right to make them slip over his precipice without their perceiving it ; he has no right to drag his red cap over them ; and he has no right craftily to encumber the happiness of another man with his misery. To approach those who are healthy, and to touch them in the darkness with his invisible ulcer, is hideous. Fauchelevent may have lent me his name, but I have no right to use it : he may have given it to me, but I was unable to take it. A name is a self. Look you, sir, I have thought a little and read a little, though I am a peasant ; and you see that I express myself properly. I explain things to myself, and have carried out my own education. Well, yes ; to abstract a name and place oneself under it is dishonest. The letters of the alphabet may be filched like a purse or a watch. To be a false signature in flesh and blood, to be a living false key, to enter among honest folk by picking their lock, never to look, but always to squint, to be internally infamous,—no ! no ! no ! no ! It is better to suffer, bleed, weep, tear one's flesh with one's nails, pass the nights writhing in agony, and gnaw one's stomach and soul. That is why I have come to tell you all this,—voluntarily, as you remarked."

He breathed painfully, and uttered this last remark :

"Formerly, I stole a loaf in order to live ; to-day, I will not steal a name in order to live."

"To live !" Marius interrupted, "you do not require that name to live."

"Ah ! I understand myself," Jean Valjean replied, raising and drooping his head several times in succession. There was a silence ; both held their tongue, sunk as they were in a gulf of thought. Marius was sitting near a table, and supporting the corner of his mouth on one of his fingers. Jean Valjean walked backwards and forwards ; he stopped before a glass and remained motionless. Then, as if



answering some internal reasoning, he said, as he looked in this glass, in which he did not see himself :

"While at present I am relieved."

He began walking again, and went to the other end of the room. At the moment when he turned he perceived that Marius was watching his walk, and he said to him, with an indescribable accent :

"I drag my leg a little. You understand why now."

Then he turned round full to Marius.

"And now, sir, imagine this. I have said nothing. I have remained Monsieur Fauchelevent. I have taken my place in your house. I am one of your family. I am in my room. I come down to breakfast in my slippers ; at night we go to the play, all three. I accompany Madame Pontmercy to the Tuileries and to the Place Royale ; we are together, and you believe me your equal. One fine day I am here, you are there. We are talking and laughing, and you hear a voice cry this name,—Jean Valjean ! and then that fearful hand, the police, issues from the shadow, and suddenly tears off my mask !"

He was silent again. Marius had risen with a shudder, and Jean Valjean continued :

"What do you say to that ?"

Marius' silence replied, and Jean Valjean continued :

"You see very well that I did right in not holding my tongue. Be happy, be in heaven, be the angel of an angel, be in the sunshine and content yourself with it, and do not trouble yourself as to the way in which a poor condemned man opens his heart and does his duty ; you have a wretched man before you, sir."

Marius slowly crossed the room, and when he was by Jean Valjean's side, offered him his hand. But Marius was compelled to take this hand which did not offer itself. Jean Valjean let him do so, and it seemed to Marius that he was pressing a hand of marble.

"My grandfather has friends," said Marius. "I will obtain your pardon."

"It is useless," Jean Valjean replied ; "I am supposed to be dead, and that is sufficient. The dead are not subjected to surveillance, and are supposed to rot quietly. Death is the same thing as pardon."

And liberating the hand which Marius held, he added with a sort of inexorable dignity :

"Moreover, duty, my duty, is the friend to whom I

have recourse, and I only need one pardon, that of my conscience."

At this moment the door opened gently at the other end of the drawing-room, and Cosette's head appeared in the crevice. Only her sweet face was visible. Her hair was in admirable confusion, and her eyelids were still swollen with sleep. She made the movement of a bird thrusting its head out of the nest, looked first at her husband, then at Jean Valjean, and cried to them laughingly—it looked like a smile issuing from a rose :

"I'll wager that you are talking politics. How stupid that is, instead of being with me !"

Jean Valjean started.

"Cosette——" Marius stammered, and he stopped. They looked like two culprits ; Cosette, radiant, continued to look at them both, and there were in her eyes gleams of Paradise.

"I have caught you in the act," Cosette said, "I just heard through this, Father Fauchelevent saying, 'Conscience, doing his duty.' That is politics, and I will have none of it. People must not talk politics on the very next day ; it is not right."

"You are mistaken, Cosette," Marius replied, "we are talking of business. We are talking about the best way of investing your six hundred thousand francs."

"I am coming," Cosette interrupted. "Do you want me here ?"

And resolutely passing through the door, she entered the drawing-room. She was dressed in a full morning gown, with a thousand folds and with large sleeves, which descended from her neck to her feet. There are in the golden skies of old Gothic paintings, these charming bags to place angels in. She contemplated herself from head to foot in a large mirror, and then exclaimed with an ineffable outburst of ecstasy :

"There was once upon a time a king and queen. Oh ! how delighted I am !"

This said, she curtsied to Marius and Jean Valjean.

"There," she said, "I am going to install myself near you in an easy-chair ; we shall breakfast in half an hour. You will say all you like, for I know very well that gentlemen must talk, and I will be very good."

Marius took her by the arm and said to her lovingly :

"We are talking about business."

"By the way," Cosette answered, "I have opened my



window, and a number of *pierrots* (*sparrows* or *masks*) have just entered the garden. Birds, not masks. To-day is Ash Wednesday, but not for the birds."

"I tell you that we are talking of business, so go, my little Cosette, leave us for a moment. We are talking figures, and they would only annoy you."

"You have put on a charming cravat this morning, Marius. You are very coquettish, monseigneur. No, they will not annoy me."

"I assure you that they will."

"No, since it is you, I shall not understand you, but I shall hear you. When a woman hears voices she loves, she does not require to understand the words they say. To be together is all I want, and I shall stay with you,—there!"

"You are my beloved Cosette! impossible."

"Impossible!"

"Yes."

"Very good," Cosette remarked, "I should have told you some news. I should have told you that grandpapa is still asleep, that your aunt is at Mass, that the chimney of my papa Fauchelevent's room smokes, that Nicolette has sent for the chimney-sweep, that Nicolette and Toussaint have already quarrelled, and that Nicolette ridicules Toussaint's stammering. Well, you shall know nothing. Ah, it is impossible? you shall see, sir, that in my turn I shall say, It is impossible. Who will be caught then? I implore you, my little Marius, to let me stay here with you two."

"I assure you that we must be alone."

"Well, am I anybody?"

Jean Valjean did not utter a word, and Cosette turned to him.

"In the first place, father, I insist on your coming and kissing me. What do you mean by saying nothing, instead of taking my part? Did one ever see a father like that? That will show you how unhappy marriage is, for my husband beats me. Come and kiss me at once."

Jean Valjean approached her, and Cosette turned to Marius.

"I make a face at you."

Then she offered her forehead to Jean Valjean, who moved a step towards her. All at once Cosette recoiled.

"Father, you are pale, does your arm pain you?"

"It is cured," said Jean Valjean.

"Have you slept badly?"

"No."

"Are you sad?"

"No."

"Kiss me. If you are well, if you sleep soundly, if you are happy, I will not scold you."

And she again offered him her forehead, and Jean Valjean set a kiss on this forehead, upon which there was a heavenly reflection.

"Smile."

Jean Valjean obeyed, but it was the smile of a ghost.

"Now, defend me against my husband."

"Cosette——" said Marius.

"Be angry, father, and tell him I am to remain. You can talk before me. You must think me very foolish. What you are saying is very astonishing then! business, placing money in a bank, that is a great thing. Men make mysteries of nothing. I mean to stay. I am very pretty this morning. Marius, look at me."

And with an adorable shrug of the shoulders and an exquisite pout, she looked at Marius. Something like a flash passed between these two beings, and they cared little about a third party being present.

"I love you," said Marius.

"I adore you," said Cosette.

And they irresistibly fell into each other's arms.

"And now," Cosette continued, as she smoothed a crease in her gown with a little triumphant pout, "I remain."

"No," Marius replied imploringly, "we have something to finish."

"Again, no?"

Marius assumed a serious tone.

"I assure you, Cosette, that it is impossible."

"Ah, you are putting on your man's voice, sir; very good, I will go. You did not support me, father; and so you, my hard husband, and you, my dear papa, are tyrants. I shall go and tell grandpapa. If you believe that I intend to return and talk platitudes to you, you are mistaken. I am proud, and I intend to wait for you at present. You will see how wearisome it will be without me. I am going, very good."

And she left the room, but two seconds after the door



opened again, her fresh, rosy face passed once again between the two folding doors, and she cried to them :

" I am very angry."

The door closed again, and darkness returned. It was like a straggling sunbeam, which, without suspecting it, had suddenly traversed the night. Marius assured himself that the door was really closed.

" Poor Cosette," he muttered, " when she learns——"

At these words Jean Valjean trembled all over, and he fixed his haggard eyes on Marius.

" Cosette! oh, yes, it is true. You will tell Cosette about it. It is fair. Stay, I did not think of that. A man has strength for one thing, but not for another. I implore you, sir, I conjure you, sir, give me your most sacred word, do not tell her. Is it not sufficient for you to know it? I was able to tell it of my own accord, without being compelled. I would have told it to the universe, to the whole world, and I should not have cared; but she, she does not know what it is, and it would horrify her. A convict, what! you would be obliged to explain to her; tell her, It is a man who has been to the galleys. She saw the chain-gang once; oh, my God!"

He sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands; it could not be heard, but from the heaving of his shoulders it could be seen that he was weeping. They were silent tears, terrible tears. There is a choking in the sob; a species of convulsion seized on him, he threw himself back in the chair, letting his arms hang, and displaying to Marius his face bathed in tears, and Marius heard him mutter so low that his voice seemed to come from a bottomless abyss. " Oh! I would like to die!"

" Be at your ease," Marius said, " I will keep your secret to myself."

And, less affected than perhaps he ought to have been, but compelled for more than an hour to listen to unexpected horrors, gradually seeing a convict taking M. Fauchelevent's place, gradually overcome by this mournful reality, and led by the natural state of the situation to notice the gap which had formed between himself and this man, Marius added :

" It is impossible for me not to say a word about the trust money which you have so faithfully and honestly given up. That is an act of probity, and it is but fair that a reward should be given you; fix the sum yourself, and it shall be paid you. Do not fear to fix it very high."

"I thank you, sir," Jean Valjean replied gently.

He remained pensive for a moment, mechanically passing the end of his forefinger over his thumb-nail, and then raised his voice :

"All is nearly finished ; there is only one thing left me."

"What is it ?"

Jean Valjean had a species of supreme agitation, and voicelessly, almost breathlessly, he stammered, rather than said :

"Now that you know, do you, sir, who are the master, believe that I ought not to see Cosette again ?"

"I believe that it would be better," Marius replied coldly.

"I will not see her again," Jean Valjean murmured. And he walked toward the door ; he placed his hand upon the handle, the door opened, Jean Valjean was going to pass out, when he suddenly closed it, then opened the door again, and returned to Marius. He was no longer pale, but livid ; and in his eyes there was a sort of tragic flame, instead of tears. His voice had grown strangely calm again.

"Stay, sir," he said, "if you like, I will come to see her ; for I assure you that I desire it greatly. If I had not longed to see Cosette I should not have made you the confession I have done, but have gone away ; but wishing to remain at the spot where Cosette is, and continue to see her, I was obliged to tell you everything honestly. You follow my reasoning, do you not ? it is a thing easy to understand. Look you, I have had her with me for nine years : we lived at first in that hovel on the boulevard, then in the convent, and then near the Luxembourg. It was there that you saw her for the first time, and you remember her blue plush bonnet. Next we went to the district of the Invalides, where there were a railway and a garden, the Rue Plumet. I lived in a little back yard where I could hear her pianoforte. Such was my life, and we never separated. That lasted nine years and seven months ; I was like her father, and she was my child. I do not know whether you understand me, M. Pontmercy, but it would be difficult to go away now, see her no more, speak to her no more, and have nothing left. If you have no objection I will come and see Cosette every now and then, but not too often, and I will not remain long. You can tell them to show me into the little room on the ground-floor ; I would certainly come in by the back door, which is used by the servants, but that might cause surprise, so it is better, I



think, for me to come by the front door. Really, sir, I should like to see Cosette a little, but as rarely as you please. Put yourself in my place, I have only that left. And then, again, we must be careful, and if I did not come at all it would have a bad effect, and appear singular. For instance, what I can do is to come in the evening, when it is beginning to grow dark."

"You can come every evening," said Marius, "and Cosette will expect you."

"You are kind, sir," said Jean Valjean.

Marius bowed to Jean Valjean, happiness accompanied despair to the door, and these two men parted.

Marius was completely unnerved. The kind of estrangement which he had ever felt for the man with whom he saw Cosette was henceforth explained. There was in this person something enigmatic, against which his instinct warned him. This enigma was the most hideous of shames, the galleys. This M. Fauchelevent was Jean Valjean, the convict. To find suddenly such a secret in the midst of his happiness is like discovering a scorpion in a turtle-dove's nest. Was the happiness of Marius and Cosette in future condensed to this proximity? was it an accomplished fact? did the acceptance of this man form part of the consummated marriage? could nothing else be done? Had Marius also married the convict? Although a man may be crowned with light and joy, though he be enjoying the grand hour of life's purple, happy love, such shocks would compel even the archangel in his ecstasy, even the demi-god in his glory, to shudder.

As always happens in changes of view of this nature, Marius asked himself whether he ought not to reproach himself? Had he failed in divination? had he been deficient in prudence? Had he voluntarily been headstrong? slightly so, perhaps. Had he entered, without taking sufficient precaution to light up the vicinity, upon this love-adventure, which resulted in his marriage with Cosette? He verified the visionary and chimerical side of his nature, a sort of internal cloud peculiar to many organisations, and which in the paroxysms of passion and grief expands, as the temperature of the soul changes, and invades the entire man to such an extent that he merely becomes a conscience enveloped in a fog. We have more than once indicated this characteristic element in Marius' individuality. He remembered that during the intoxication of his love in the Rue



Plumet, during those six or seven ecstatic weeks, he had not even spoken to Cosette about the drama in the Gorbeau hovel, during which the victim was so strangely silent both in the struggle and eventual escape. How was it that he had not spoken to Cosette about it? and yet it was so close and so frightful? how was it that he had not even mentioned the Thénardiens, and especially on the day when he met Eponine? He found almost a difficulty in explaining to himself now his silence at that period, but he was able to account for it. He remembered his confusion, his intoxication for Cosette, his love absorbing everything, the carrying off of one by the other into the ideal world, and perhaps, too, as the imperceptible amount of reason mingled with that violent and charming state of the mind, a vague and dull instinct to hide and efface in his memory that formidable adventure with which he feared contact, in which he wished to play no part, from which he stood aloof, and of which he could not be narrator or witness without being an accuser. Moreover, these few weeks had been a flash, and they had formed him for nothing, save loving. In short, when all was revolved, and everything examined, supposing that he had described the Gorbeau trap to Cosette, had mentioned the Thénardiens to her, what would have been the consequence, even if he had discovered that Jean Valjean was a convict; would that have changed him, Marius, or his Cosette? Would he have shrunk back? Would he have loved her less? Would he have refused to marry her? No. Would it have made any change in what had happened? No. There was nothing, therefore, to regret, nothing to reproach, and all was well. There is a God for those drunkards who are called lovers, and Marius had blindly followed the road which he had selected with his eyes open. Love had bandaged his eyes to lead him whither?—to paradise.

But this paradise was henceforth complicated by an infernal proximity, and the old estrangement of Marius for this man, for this Fauchelevent who had become Jean Valjean, was at present mingled with horror. Yet in this horror, let us say it, there was some pity, and even a certain degree of surprise. This robber, this relapsed robber, had restored a deposit, and what a deposit? six hundred thousand francs. He alone held the secret of that deposit, he could have kept it all, but he gave it all up. Moreover, he had revealed his situation of his own accord, nothing



compelled him to do so, and if he, Marius, knew who he was it was through himself. There was in this confession more than the acceptance of humiliation, there was the acceptance of peril. For a condemned man a mask is not a mask, but a shelter, and he had renounced that shelter. A false name is a security, and he had thrown away that false name. He, the galley-slave, could conceal himself for ever in an honest family, and he had resisted that temptation, and for what motive? through scruples of conscience. He had explained himself with the irresistible accent of truth. In short, whoever this Jean Valjean might be, his was incontestably an awakened conscience. Such attacks of justice and honesty do not belong to vulgar natures, and an awakening of the conscience is greatness of soul. Jean Valjean was sincere, and this sincerity, visible, palpable, irrefragable, and evident in the grief which it caused him, rendered his statements valuable, and gave authority to all that this man said. Here, for Marius, was a strange inversion of situations. What issued from M. Fauchelevent? distrust: what was disengaged from Jean Valjean? confidence. In the mysterious balance-sheet of this Jean Valjean which Marius mentally drew up, he verified the credit, he verified the debit, and tried to arrive at a balance. But all this was as in a storm; Marius striving to form a distinct idea of this man, and pursuing Jean Valjean, so to speak, to the bottom of his thoughts, lost him, and found him again in a fatal mist.

The honest restoration of the trust-money and the probity of the confession were good, and formed as it were a break in the cloud; but then the cloud became black again. However confused Marius' reminiscences might be, some shadows still returned to him. What, after all, was that adventure in the Jondrette garret? why on the arrival of the police did that man, instead of complaining, escape? here Marius found the answer,—because this man was a convict who had broken his ban. Another question, Why did this man come to the barricade? for at present Marius distinctly saw again that recollection, which reappeared in his emotions like sympathetic ink before the fire. This man was at the barricade, and did not fight, what did he want there? Before this question a spectre rose, and gave the answer, Javert. Marius perfectly remembered now the mournful vision of Jean Valjean dragging the bound Javert out of the barricade, and heard again behind the angle of



the little Mondétour lane the frightful pistol-shot. There was, probably, a hatred between this spy and this galley-slave; the one annoyed the other. Jean Valjean went to the barricade to revenge himself; he arrived late, and was probably aware that Javert was a prisoner there. Corsican vendetta has penetrated certain lower strata of society, and is the law with them; it is so simple that it does not astonish minds which have half returned to virtue, and their hearts are so constituted that a criminal, when on the path of repentance, may be scrupulous as to a robbery, and not so as to vengeance. Jean Valjean had killed Javert, or, at least, that seemed evident. The last question of all admitted of no reply, and this question Marius felt like a pair of pincers. How was it that the existence of Jean Valjean had so long elbowed that of Cosette? What was this gloomy sport of Providence which had brought this man and this child in contact? are there chains for two forged in heaven, and does God take pleasure in coupling the angel with the demon? a crime and an innocence can, then, be chamber companions in the mysterious hulks of misery? In that defile of condemned men which is called human destiny, two foreheads may pass along side by side, one simple, the other formidable—one all bathed in the divine whiteness of dawn, the other eternally branded? Who could have attached the lamb to the wolf, and, even more incomprehensible still, the wolf to the lamb? for the wolf loved the lamb, the ferocious being adored the weak being, and for nine years the angel had leant on the monster for support. The childhood and maidenhood of Cosette, and her virgin growth toward life and light, had been protected by this deformed devotion. What, was this Valjean carrying on the education of Cosette? what was this figure of darkness, whose care it was to preserve from every shadow and every cloud the rising of a star?

That was Jean Valjean's secret; that was also God's secret, and Marius recoiled before this double secret. God has His instruments, and employs whom He likes as tool, and is not responsible to him. Do we know how God sets to work? Jean Valjean had laboured on Cosette, and had to some extent formed her mind, that was incontestable. Well, what then? The workman was horrible, but the work was admirable, and God produces His miracles as He thinks proper. He had constructed this charming Cosette and employed Jean Valjean on the job, and it had pleased



him to choose this strange assistant. What explanation have we to ask of Him? is it the first time that manure has helped spring to produce the rose? Marius gave himself these answers, and declared to himself that they were good. On all the points which we have indicated he had not dared to press Jean Valjean, though he did not confess to himself that he dared not. In whatever circle of ideas Marius might turn, he always came back to a certain horror of Jean Valjean; a sacred horror, perhaps, for, as we have stated, he felt a *quid divinum* in this man. But, though it was so, and whatever extenuating circumstances he might seek, he was always compelled to fall back on this: he was a convict, that is to say, a being who has not even a place on the social ladder, being beneath the lowest rung. Marius, in penal matters, democrat though he was, still adhered to the inexorable system, and he entertained all the ideas of the law about those whom the law strikes. He had not yet made every progress, we are forced to say; he had not yet learned to distinguish between what is written by man and what is written by God, between the law and the right. He had examined and weighed the claim which man sets up to dispose of the irrevocable, the irreparable; and the word vengeance was not repulsive to him. He considered it simple that certain breaches of the written law should be followed by eternal penalties, and he accepted social condemnation as a civilising process. He was still at this point, though infallibly certain to advance at a later date, for his nature was good, and entirely composed of latent progress.

In this medium of ideas Jean Valjean appeared to him deformed and repelling, for he was the punished man, the convict. This word was to him like the sound of the trumpet of the last judgment, and after regarding Jean Valjean for a long time, his last gesture was to turn away his head—*vade retro*. Marius, we must recognise the fact and lay stress on it, while questioning Jean Valjean to such an extent that Jean Valjean himself said, "You are shriving me," had not, however, asked him two or three important questions. It was not that they had not presented themselves to his mind, but he had been afraid of them. The Jondrette garret? the barricade? Javert? Who knew where the revelations might have stopped? Jean Valjean did not seem the man to recoil, and who knows whether Marius, after urging him on, might not have wished to check him?



In certain supreme conjunctures has it not happened to all of us that after asking a question we have stopped our ears, in order not to hear the answer? a man is specially guilty of such an act of cowardice when he is in love. It is not wise to drive sinister situations into a corner, especially when the indissoluble side of our own life is fatally mixed up with them. What a frightful light might issue from Jean Valjean's desperate explanations, and who knows whether that hideous brightness might not have been reflected on Cosette? Whether rightly or wrongly, Marius was terrified, for he already knew too much, and he had rather to blind than to enlighten himself. He wildly bore off Cosette in his arms, closing his eyes upon Jean Valjean. In this state of mind it was a crushing perplexity for Marius to think that henceforth this man would have any contact with Cosette; and he now almost reproached himself for not having asked these formidable questions before which he had recoiled, and from which an implacable and definitive decision might have issued. He considered himself too kind, too gentle, and, let us say it, too weak; and the weakness had led him to make a fatal concession. He had allowed himself to be affected, and had done wrong; he ought simply and purely to have rejected Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean was an incendiary, and he ought to have freed his house from the presence of this man. He was angry with himself, he was angry with that whirlwind of emotions which had deafened, blinded, and carried him away. He was dissatisfied with himself.

What was he to do now? the visits of Jean Valjean were most deeply repulsive to him. Of what use was it that this man should come to his house? what did he want here? Here he refused to investigate the matter, he refused to study; and he was unwilling to probe his own heart. He had promised, he had allowed himself to be drawn into a promise: Jean Valjean held that promise, and he must keep his word even with a convict,—above all with a convict. Still his first duty was toward Cosette; and a word, a repulsion, which overcame everything else, caused him a loathing. Marius confusedly revolved all these ideas in his mind, passing from one to the other, and shaken by all. Hence arose a deep trouble, which it was not easy to conceal from Cosette, but love is a talent, and Marius succeeded in doing it. However, he asked, without any apparent motive, some questions of Cosette, who was as candid



as a dove is white, and suspected nothing ; he spoke to her of her childhood and her youth, and he convinced himself more and more that this convict had been to Cosette as good, paternal, and respectful as a man can be. All that Marius had dimly seen and conjectured was real. This darkly, mysterious nettle had loved and protected this lily.

## CHAPTER CXVII.

THE next day, at nightfall, Jean Valjean tapped at the gateway of the Gillenormand mansion, and it was Basque who received him. Basque was in the yard at the appointed time, as if he had had his orders. It sometimes happens that people say to a servant, "You will watch for Mr. So-and-So's arrival." Basque, without waiting for Jean Valjean to come up to him, said :

"Monsieur le Baron has instructed me to ask you, sir, whether you wish to go upstairs or stay down here?"

"Stay down here," Jean Valjean replied.

Basque, who, however, was perfectly respectful in his manner, opened the door of the ground-floor room, and said, "I will go and inform her ladyship." The room which Jean Valjean entered was a damp, arched, basement room, employed as a cellar at times, looking out on the street, with a flooring of red tiles, and badly lighted by an iron-barred window. This room was not one of those which are harassed by the broom and mop, and the dust was quiet there. The room, which was small and low-ceilinged, was furnished with a pile of empty bottles collected in a corner. The wall, covered with a yellow ochre wash, crumbled off in large patches ; at the end was a mantelpiece of black wood, with a narrow shelf, and a fire was lighted in it, which indicated that Jean Valjean's reply "remain down here" had been calculated on. Two chairs were placed, one in each chimney-corner, and between the chairs was spread, in guise of carpet, an old bedroom rug, which displayed more cord than wool. The room was illumined by the flickering of the fire, and the twilight through the window. Jean Valjean was fatigued, for several days he had not eaten or slept, and he fell into one of the arm-chairs. Basque returned, placed a lighted candle on the mantelpiece, and withdrew. Jean Valjean, who was sitting with hanging head, did not notice either Basque or the candle, till all at

once he started up, for Cosette was behind him: he had not seen her come in, but he felt that she was coming. He turned round and contemplated her; she was adorably lovely. But what he gazed at with this profound glance was not the beauty but the soul.

"Well, father," Cosette exclaimed, "I knew that you were singular, but I could never have expected this. What an idea! Marius told me that it was your wish to see me here."

"Yes, it is."

"I expected that answer, and I warn you that I am going to have a scene with you. Let us begin with the beginning: kiss me, father."

And she offered her cheek, but Jean Valjean remained motionless.

"You do not stir, I mark the fact! it is the attitude of a culprit. But I do not care, I forgive you. Christ said, 'Offer the other cheek'; here it is."

And she offered the other cheek, but Jean Valjean did not stir; it seemed as if his feet were riveted to the floor.

"Things are growing serious," said Cosette. "What have I done to you? I am offended, and you must make it up with me; you will dine with us?"

"I have dined."

"That is not true, and I will have you scolded by M. Gillenormand. Grandfathers are made to lay down the law to fathers. Come, go with me to the drawing-room. At once."

"Impossible."

Cosette here lost a little ground; she ceased to order and began questioning.

"But why? and you choose the ugliest room in the house to see me in. It is horrible here."

"You know, Cosette——" Jean Valjean broke off. "You know, madame, that I am peculiar, and have my fancies."

"Madame—you know—more novelties; what does this all mean?"

Jean Valjean gave her that heart-broken smile to which he sometimes had recourse.

"You wished to be a lady, and are one."

"Not for you, father."

"Do not call me father."

"What?"

"Call me Monsieur Jean, or Jean, if you like."



"You are no longer father? I am no longer Cosette? Monsieur Jean? why, what does it mean? These are revolutions. What has happened? Look me in the face, if you can. And you will not live with us! and you will not accept our bedroom! What have I done to offend you? Oh, what have I done? there must be something."

"Nothing."

"In that case then?"

"All is as usual."

"Why do you change your name?"

"You have changed yours."

He smiled the same smile again, and added:

"Since you are Madame Pontmercy, I may fairly be Monsieur Jean."

"I do not understand anything, and all this is idiotic. I will ask my husband's leave for you to be Monsieur Jean, and I hope that he will not consent. You cause me great sorrow, and though you may have whims, you have no right to make your little Cosette grieve. That is wrong, and you have no right to be naughty, for you are so good."

As he made no reply, she seized both his hands eagerly, and with an irresistible movement raising them to her face, she pressed them against her neck under her chin, which is a profound sign of affection.

"Oh," she said, "be kind to me." And she continued:

"This is what I call being kind; to behave yourself, come and live here, for there are birds here as in the Rue Plumet; to live with us, leave that hole in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, give us no more riddles to guess; to be like everybody else, dine with us, breakfast with us, and be my father."

He removed her hands:

"You no longer want a father, as you have a husband."

Cosette broke out:

"I no longer want a father! things like that have no common sense, and I really do not know what to say."

"If Toussaint were here," Jean Valjean continued, like a man seeking authorities and who clings to every branch; "she would be the first to allow that I have always had strange ways of my own. There is nothing new in it, for I always loved my dark corner."

"But it is cold here, and we cannot see distinctly, and it is abominable to wish to be Monsieur Jean, and I shall not allow you to call me madame."

"As I was coming along just now," Jean Valjean replied, "I saw a very pretty piece of furniture at a cabinet-maker's in the Rue St. Louis. If I were a pretty woman, I should treat myself to it. It is a very nice toilet-table in the present fashion, made of rosewood, I think you call it, and inlaid. There is a rather large glass with drawers, and it is very nice."

"Hou ! the ugly bear !" Cosette replied. And clenching her teeth, and parting her lips in the most graceful way possible, she blew at Jean Valjean ; it was a Grace' copying a cat.

"I am furious," she went on, "and since yesterday you have all put me in a passion. I do not understand it at all ; you do not defend me against Marius, Marius does not take my part against you, and I am all alone. I have a nice room prepared, and if I could have put le bon Dieu in it, I would have done so ; but my room is left on my hands and my lodger deserts me. I order Nicolette to prepare a nice little dinner, and—they will not touch your dinner, madame. And my father Fauchelevent wishes me to call him Monsieur Jean, and that I should receive him in a frightful old, ugly, mildewed cellar, in which the walls wear a beard, and empty bottles represent the looking-glasses, and spiders' webs the curtains. I allow that you are a singular man, it is your way, but a truce is granted to a newly-married woman ; and you ought not to have begun to be singular again so soon. You are going to be very satisfied, then, in your Rue de l'Homme Armé ; well, I was very wretched there. What have I done to offend you ? you cause me great sorrow. Fie !"

And, suddenly growing serious, she looked intently at Jean Valjean and added :

"You are angry with me for being happy, is that it ?"

Simplicity sometimes penetrates unconsciously very deep, and this question, simple for Cosette, was profound for Jean Valjean. Cosette wished to scratch, but she tore. Jean Valjean turned pale, he remained for a moment without answering, and then murmured with an indescribable accent, and speaking to himself :

"Her happiness was the object of my life, and at present God may order my departure. Cosette, thou art happy, and my course is run."

"Ah ! you said 'thou' to me," Cosette exclaimed, and leaped on his neck.



Jean Valjean wildly strained her to his heart, for he felt as if he were almost taking her back again.

"Thank you, father," Cosette said to him.

The excitement was getting too painful for Jean Valjean ; he gently withdrew himself from Cosette's arms, and took up his hat.

"Well?" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean replied :

"I am going to leave you, madame, as you will be missed."

And on the threshold he added :

"I said to you 'thou'; tell your husband that it shall not happen again. Forgive me."

Jean Valjean left Cosette stupefied by this enigmatical leave-taking.

The following day, at the same hour, Jean Valjean came. Cosette asked him no questions, was no longer astonished, no longer exclaimed that it was cold, no longer alluded to the drawing-room ; she avoided saying either father or Monsieur Jean. She allowed herself to be called madame ; there was only a diminution of her delight perceptible, and she would have been sad, had sorrow been possible. It is probable that she had held with Marius one of those conversations in which the beloved man says what he wishes, explains nothing, and satisfies the beloved woman ; for the curiosity of lovers does not extend far beyond their love. The basement room had been furbished up a little ; Basque had suppressed the bottles, and Nicolette the spiders. Every following day brought Jean Valjean back at the same hour ; he came daily, as he had not the strength to take Marius' permission otherwise than literally. Marius arranged so as to be absent at the hour when Jean Valjean came, and the house grew accustomed to M. Fauchelevent's new mode of behaving. Toussaint helped in it ; "My master was always so," she repeated. The grandfather issued this decree—"He is an original"; and everything was said. Moreover, at the age of ninety no connection is possible ; everything is juxtaposition, and a new-comer is in the way ; there is no place for him, for habits are unalterably formed. Nobody caught a glimpse of the nether gloom.

Several weeks passed thus. A new life gradually took possession of Cosette. The relations which marriage creates, visits, the management of the household, and

pleasures, that great business. The pleasures of Cosette were not costly, they consisted in only one, being with Marius. To go out with him, remain at home with him, was the great occupation of her life. It was for them an ever novel joy to go out arm in arm, in the sunshine, in the open streets, without hiding themselves, in the face of everybody. Cosette had one vexation, Toussaint could not agree with Nicolette (for the wedding of the two old maids was impossible), and left. The grandfather was quite well; Marius had a few briefs now and then; Aunt Gillenormand peacefully lived with the married pair that lateral life which sufficed her, and Jean Valjean came daily. The madame and the Monsieur Jean, however, made him different to Cosette, and the care he had himself taken to detach himself from her succeeded. She was more and more gay, and less and less affectionate, and yet she loved him dearly still, and he felt it. One day she suddenly said to him, "You were my father, you are no longer my father; you were my uncle, you are no longer my uncle; you were Monsieur Fauchelevent, and are now Jean. Who are you then? I do not like all this. If I did not know you to be so good, I should be afraid of you." He still lived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, as he could not resolve to remove from the quarter in which Cosette lived. At first he only stayed a few minutes with Cosette, and then went away, but by degrees he grew into the habit of making his visits longer. It might be said that he took advantage of the lengthening days; he arrived sooner and went away later. One day, the word father slipped over Cosette's lips, and a gleam of joy lit up Jean Valjean's old solemn face, but he chided her: "Say Jean."

"Ah, that is true," she replied, with a burst of laughter, "Monsieur Jean."

"That is right," he said, and he turned away that she might not see him wipe a tear from his eyes.

This was the last occasion. After this last gleam complete extinction took place. There was no more familiarity, no more good-day with a kiss, and never again that so deeply tender word "father." He had been, at his own request and with his own complicity, expelled from all those joys in succession, and he underwent this misery, that, after losing Cosette entirely in one day, he was then obliged to lose her again bit by bit. The eye eventually grows accustomed to cellar light, and he found it enough to have an apparition



of Cosette daily. His whole life was concentrated in that hour; he sat down by her side, looked at her in silence, or else talked to her about former years, her childhood, the convent, and her little friends of those days. One afternoon—it was an early day in April, already warm, but still fresh, the moment of the sun's great gaiety—Marius said to Cosette, "We said that we would go and see our garden in the Rue Plumet again. Come, we must not be ungrateful." And they flew off like two swallows toward the spring. This garden in the Rue Plumet produced on them the effect of a dawn, for they already had behind them in life something that resembled the spring-time of their love. The house in the Rue Plumet, being taken on lease, still belonged to Cosette; they went to this garden and house, found themselves again, and forgot themselves there. In the evening Jean Valjean went to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire at the usual hour. "My lady went out with the baron," said Basque, "and has not returned yet." He sat down silently and waited an hour, but Cosette did not come in; he hung his head and went away. Cosette was so intoxicated by the walk in "their garden," and so pleased at having "lived a whole day in her past," that she spoke of nothing else the next day. She did not remark that she had not seen Jean Valjean.

"How did you go there?" Jean Valjean asked her.

"On foot."

"And how did you return?"

"On foot too."

For some time Jean Valjean had noticed the close life which the young couple led, and was annoyed at it. Marius' economy was strict, and that word had its absolute meaning with Jean Valjean; he hazarded a question.

"Why do you not keep a carriage? A little coupé would not cost you more than five hundred francs a month, and you are rich."

"I do not know," Cosette answered.

"It is the same with Toussaint," Jean Valjean continued; "she has left, and you have engaged no one in her place. Why not?"

"Nicolette is sufficient."

"But you must want a lady's-maid?"

"Have I not Marius?"

"You ought to have a house of your own, servants of your own, a carriage, and a box at the opera. Nothing

is too good for you. Then why not take advantage of the fact of your being rich? Wealth adds to happiness."

Cosette made no reply. Jean Valjean's visits did not grow shorter, on the contrary, for when it is the heart that is slipping, a man does not stop on the incline. When Jean Valjean wished to prolong his visit and make the hour be forgotten, he sung the praises of Marius, he found him handsome, noble, brave, witty, eloquent, and good. Cosette added to the praise, and Jean Valjean began again. It was an inexhaustible subject, and there were volumes in the six letters composing Marius' name. In this way Jean Valjean managed to stop for a long time, for it was so sweet to see Cosette, and forget by her side. It was a dressing for his wound. It frequently happened that Basque would come and say twice,—“M. Gillenormand has sent me to remind Madame la Baronne that dinner is waiting.” On those days Jean Valjean would return home very thoughtful. Was there any truth in that comparison of the chrysalis which had occurred to Marius' mind? Was Jean Valjean really an obstinate chrysalis, constantly paying visits to his butterfly? One day he remained longer than usual; the next day he noticed there was no fire in the grate. “Stay,” he thought, “no fire?”—and he gave himself this explanation—“It is very simple; we are in April, and the cold weather has passed.”

“Good gracious! how cold it is here!” Cosette exclaimed as she came in.

“Oh no,” said Jean Valjean.

“Then it was you who told Basque not to light a fire?”

“Yes; we shall have May here directly.”

“But fires keep on till June; in this cellar there ought to be one all the year round.”

“I thought it was unnecessary.”

“That is just like one of your ideas,” Cosette remarked.

The next day there was a fire, but the two chairs were placed at the other end of the room, near the door. “What is the meaning of that?” Jean Valjean thought; he fetched the chairs and placed them in their usual place near the chimney. This rekindled fire, however, encouraged him, and he made the conversation last even longer than usual. As he rose to leave Cosette remarked to him:

“My husband said a funny thing to me yesterday.”

“What was it?”

“He said to me, ‘Cosette, we have thirty thousand



francs a year,—twenty-seven of yours, and three that my grandfather allows me.' I replied, 'That makes thirty;' and he continued, 'Would you have the courage to live on the three thousand?' I answered, 'Yes, on nothing, provided that it be with you;' and then I asked him, 'Why did you say that to me?' He replied, 'I merely wished to know.'"

Jean Valjean had not a word to say. Cosette probably expected some explanation from him, but he listened to her in a sullen silence. He went back to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, and was so profoundly abstracted that, instead of entering his own house, he went into the next one. It was not till he had gone up nearly two flights of stairs that he noticed his mistake, and came down again. His mind was crammed with conjectures: it was evident that Marius entertained doubts as to the origin of the six hundred thousand francs, that he feared some impure source; he might even, who knew? have discovered that this money came from him, Jean Valjean; that he hesitated to touch this suspicious fortune, and was repugnant to use it as his own, preferring that Cosette and he should remain poor than be rich with dubious wealth. Moreover, Jean Valjean was beginning to feel himself shown to the door. On the following day he had a species of shock on entering the basement room; the fauteuils had disappeared, and there was not even a seat of any sort.

"Dear me, no chairs," Cosette exclaimed on entering; "where are they?"

"They are no longer here," Jean Valjean replied.

"That is rather too much."

Jean Valjean stammered:

"I told Basque to remove them."

"For what reason?"

"I shall only remain a few minutes to-day."

"Few or many, that is no reason for standing."

"I believe that Basque required the chairs for the drawing-room."

"Why?"

"You have probably company this evening."

"Not a soul."

Jean Valjean had not another word to say, and Cosette shrugged her shoulders.

"Have the chairs removed! The other day you ordered the fire to be left off! How singular you are!"

"Good-bye," Jean Valjean murmured.

He did not say, "Good-bye, Cosette," but he had not the strength to say, "Good-bye, madame."

He went away, crushed, for this time he had comprehended. The next day he did not come, and Cosette did not remark this till the evening.

"Dear me," she said, "Monsieur Jean did not come to-day."

She felt a slight pang at the heart, but she scarce noticed it, as she was at once distracted by a kiss from Marius. The next day he did not come either. Cosette paid no attention to this, spent the evening, and slept at night as usual, and only thought of it when she woke; she was so happy! She very soon sent Nicolette to Monsieur Jean's to see whether he were ill, and why he had not come to see her on the previous day, and Nicolette brought back Monsieur Jean's answer. "He was not ill, but was busy, and would come soon, as soon as he could. But he was going to make a little journey, and madame would remember that he was accustomed to do so every now and then. She need not feel at all alarmed or trouble herself about him." Nicolette, on entering Monsieur Jean's room, had repeated to him her mistress' exact words,—"That madame sent to know 'why Monsieur Jean had not called on the previous day?'"

"I have not called for two days," Jean Valjean said quietly. The observation escaped the notice of Nicolette, who reported nothing of it to Cosette.

## CHAPTER CXVIII.

DURING the last months of spring and the early months of summer, 1833, the scattered wayfarers in the Marais, the shopkeepers, and the idlers in the doorways, noticed an old gentleman, decently dressed in black, who every day, at nearly the same hour in the evening, left the Rue de l'Homme Armé, in the direction of the Rue Sainte Croix de la Bretonnerie, passed in front of the Blancs Manteaux, reached the Rue Culture Sainte Catharine, and on coming to the Rue de l'Echarpe, turned to his left and entered the Rue St. Louis. There he walked slowly, with head stretched forward, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, with his eye incessantly fixed on a spot which always seemed his



maghet, and which was nought else than the corner of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. The nearer he came to this corner, the more brightly his eye flashed, a sort of joy illumined his eyeballs, like an internal dawn; he had a fascinated and affectionate air, his lips made obscure movements as if speaking to some one whom he could not see, he smiled vaguely, and he advanced as slowly as he could. It seemed as if, while wishing to arrive, he was afraid of the moment when he came quite close. When he had only a few houses between himself and the street which appeared to attract him, his step became so slow that at moments he seemed not to be moving at all. The vacillation of his head and the fixedness of his eye suggested the needle seeking the pole. Whatever time he might make his arrival last, he must arrive in the end; when he reached the corner of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, he trembled, thrust his head with a species of gloomy timidity beyond the corner of the last house, and looked into this street, and there was in this glance something that resembled the bewilderment of the impossible and the reflection of a closed paradise. Then a tear, which had been gradually collecting in the corner of his eyelashes, having grown large enough to fall, glided down his cheeks, and sometimes stopped at his mouth. The old man tasted its bitter flavour. He stood thus for some minutes as if he were of stone; then returned by the same road, at the same pace, and the farther he got away the more lustreless his eye became.

By degrees this old man ceased going as far as the corner of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire; he stopped half-way in the Rue St. Louis; at times a little farther off, at times a little nearer. One day he stopped at the corner of the Rue Culture Sainte Catharine and gazed at the Rue des Filles du Calvaire from a distance; then he silently shook his head from right to left, as if refusing himself something, and turned back. Ere long he did not reach even the Rue St. Louis; he arrived at the Rue Pavie, shook his head, and turned back; then he did not go beyond the Rue des Trois Pavillons; and then he did not pass the Blancs Manteaux. He seemed like a clock which was not wound up, and whose oscillations grow shorter and shorter till they stop. Every day he left his house at the same hour, undertook the same walk, but did not finish it, and incessantly shortened it, though probably unconscious of the fact. His whole countenance expressed this sole idea, Of what good



is it? His eyes were lustreless, and there was no radiance in them. The tears were also dried up; they no longer collected in the corner of his eyelashes, and this pensive eye was dry. The old man's head was still thrust forward; the chin moved at times, and the creases in his thin neck were painful to look on. At times, when the weather was bad, he had an umbrella under his arm, which he never opened. The good women of the district said, "He is an innocent," and the children followed him, laughing.

It is a terrible thing to be happy! How pleased we are with it! how all-sufficient we find it! how, when possessed of the false object of life, happiness, we forget the true one, duty! We are bound to say, however, that it would be unjust to accuse Marius. Marius, as we have explained, before his marriage asked no questions of M. Fauchelevent, and since had been afraid to ask any of Jean Valjean. He had regretted the promise which he had allowed to be drawn from him, and had repeatedly said to himself that he had done wrong in making this concession to despair. He had restricted himself to gradually turning Jean Valjean out of his house, and effacing him as far as possible from Cosette's mind. He had to some extent constantly stationed himself between Cosette and Jean Valjean, feeling certain that in this way she would not perceive it, or think of it. It was more than an effacement, it was an eclipse. Marius did what he considered necessary and just; he believed that he had serious reasons, some of which we have seen, and some we have yet to see, for getting rid of Jean Valjean, without harshness, but without weakness. Chance having made him acquainted, in a trial in which he was retained, with an ex-clerk of Laffitte's bank, he had obtained, without seeking it, mysterious information, which, in truth, he had not been able to examine, through respect for the secret he had promised to keep, and through regard for Jean Valjean's perilous situation. He believed, at this very moment, that he had a serious duty to perform, the restitution of the six hundred thousand francs to some one whom he was seeking as discreetly as he could. In the meanwhile, he abstained from touching that money.

As for Cosette, she was not acquainted with any of these secrets; but it would be harsh to condemn her also. Between Marius and her there was an omnipotent magnetism, which made her do instinctively, and almost mechanically, whatever Marius wished. She felt a wish of



Marius in the matter of Monsieur Jean, and she conformed to it. Her husband had said nothing to her, but she underwent the vague but clear presence of his tacit intentions, and blindly obeyed. Her obedience in this case consisted in not remembering what Marius forgot; and she had no effort to make in doing so. Without her knowing why, her mind had so thoroughly become that of her husband, that whatever covered itself with a shadow in Marius' thoughts was obscured in hers. Let us not go too far, however; as regards Jean Valjean, this effacement and this forgetfulness were only superficial; and she was thoughtless rather than forgetful. In her heart she truly loved the man whom she had so long called father, but she loved her husband more, and this had slightly falsified the balance of this heart, which weighed down on one side only. It happened at times that Cosette would speak of Jean Valjean and express her surprise, and then Marius would calm her. "He is away, I believe; did he not say that he was going on a journey?"—"That is true," Cosette thought, "he used to disappear like that, but not for so long a time." Twice or thrice she sent Nicolette to inquire in the Rue de l'Homme Armé whether Monsieur Jean had returned from his tour, and Jean Valjean sent answer in the negative. Cosette asked no more, as she had on earth but one want, Marius. Let us also say that Marius and Cosette had been absent too. They went to Vernon, and Marius took Cosette to his father's tomb. Marius had gradually abstracted Cosette from Jean Valjean, and Cosette had allowed it. However, what is called much too harshly in certain cases the ingratitude of children is not always so reprehensible a thing as may be believed.

One day Jean Valjean went downstairs, took three steps in the street, sat down upon a stone block, the same one on which Gavroche had found him sitting in thought on the night of June 5th; he stayed there a few minutes, and then went up again. This was the last oscillation of the pendulum; the next day he did not leave his room; the next to that he did not leave his bed. The porter's wife, who prepared his poor meals for him, some cabbage or a few potatoes and a little bacon, looked at the brown earthenware plate, and exclaimed:

"Why, poor dear man, you ate nothing yesterday."

"Yes, I did," Jean Valjean answered.

"The plate is quite full."

"Look at the water-jug : it is empty."

"That proves that you have drunk, but does not prove that you have eaten."

"Well," said Jean Valjean, "suppose that I only felt hungry for water?"

"That is called thirst, and if a man does not eat at the same time it is called fever."

"I will eat to-morrow."

"Or on Trinity Sunday. Why not to-day? Whoever thought of saying, I will eat to-morrow? To leave my plate without touching it; my rashers were so good."

Jean Valjean took the old woman's hand.

"I promise you to eat them," he said in his gentle voice.

"I am not pleased with you," the woman replied.

Jean Valjean never saw any other human creature but this good woman : there are in Paris streets through which people never pass, and houses which people never enter, and he lived in one of those streets and one of those houses. During the time when he still went out he had bought at a brazier's for a few sous a small copper crucifix, which he suspended from a nail opposite his bed ; that gibbet is ever good to look on. A week passed thus, and Jean Valjean still remained in bed. The porter's wife said to her husband, "The old gentleman upstairs does not get up, he does not eat, and he will not last long. He has a sorrow, and no one will get it out of my head but that his daughter has made a bad match."

The porter replied, with the accent of marital sovereignty :

"If he is rich, he can have a doctor ; if he is not rich, he can't. If he has no doctor, he will die."

"And if he has one?"

"He will die," said the porter.

The porter's wife began digging up with an old knife the grass between what she called her pavement, and while doing so grumbled :

"It's a pity. An old man who is so clean. He is as white as a pullet."

She saw a doctor belonging to the quarter passing along the bottom of the street, and took upon herself to ask him to go up.

"It's on the second floor," she said ; "you will only have to go in, for, as the old gentleman no longer leaves his bed, the key is always in the door."

The physician saw Jean Valjean and spoke to him :



when he came down again the porter's wife was waiting for him.

"Well, doctor?"

"He is very ill."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Everything and nothing. He is a man who, from all appearances, has lost a beloved person. People die of that."

"What did he say to you?"

"He told me that he was quite well."

"Will you call again, doctor?"

"Yes," the physician replied; "but another than I must come too."

One evening Jean Valjean had a difficulty in rising on his elbow; he took hold of his wrist and could not find his pulse; his breathing was short, and stopped every now and then, and he perceived that he was weaker than he had ever yet been. Then, doubtless under the pressure of some supreme desire, he made an effort, sat up, and dressed himself. He put on his old workman's clothes; for, as he no longer went out, he had returned to them and preferred them. He was compelled to pause several times while dressing himself; and the perspiration poured off his forehead, merely through the effort of putting on his jacket. Ever since he had been alone he had placed his bed in the anteroom, so as to occupy as little as possible of the deserted apartments. He opened the valise, and took out Cosette's clothing, which he spread on his bed. The Bishop's candlesticks were at their place on the mantelpiece; he took two wax candles out of a drawer and put them up, and then, though it was broad summer daylight, he lit them. We sometimes see candles lighted thus in open day in rooms where dead men are lying. Each step he took in going from one article of furniture to another exhausted him, and he was obliged to sit down. It was not ordinary fatigue, which expends the strength in order to renew it; it was the remnant of possible motion; it was exhausted life falling drop by drop in crushing efforts which will not be made again.

One of the chairs on which he sank was placed near the mirror, so fatal for him, so providential for Marius, in which he had read Cosette's reversed writing on the blotting-book. He saw himself in this mirror, and could not recognise himself. He was eighty years of age; before Marius'

marriage he had looked scarce fifty, but the last year had reckoned as thirty. What he had on his forehead was no longer the wrinkle of age, but the mysterious mark of death, and the laceration of the pitiless nail could be traced on it. His cheeks were flaccid, the skin of his face had that colour which leads to the belief that there is already earth upon it; the two corners of his mouth drooped as in that mask which the ancients sculptured on the tomb. He had reached that stage, the last phase of dejection, in which grief no longer flows; it is, so to speak, coagulated, and there is on the soul something like a clot of despair. Night had set in, and he with difficulty dragged a table and the old easy-chair to the chimney, and laid on the table pen, ink, and paper. This done, he fainted away, and when he regained his senses he was thirsty; as he could not lift the water-jar, he bent down with an effort and drank a mouthful. Then he turned to the bed, and, still seated, for he was unable to stand, he gazed at the little black dress, and all those dear objects. Such contemplations last for hours which appear minutes. All at once he shuddered, and felt that the cold had struck him. He leant his elbows on the table which the Bishop's candlesticks illumined, and took up the pen. As neither the pen nor the ink had been used for a long time the nibs of the pen were bent, the ink was dried up, and he was therefore obliged to put a few drops of water in the ink, which he could not do without stopping and sitting down twice or thrice; and he was forced to write with the back of the pen. He wiped his forehead from time to time, and his hand trembled as he wrote the few following lines:—

“Cosette, I bless you. I am about to explain to you. Your husband did right in making me understand that I ought to go away; still, he was slightly in error as to what he believed, but he acted rightly. He is a worthy man, and love him dearly when I am gone from you. Monsieur Pontmercy, always love my beloved child. Cosette, this paper will be found; this is what I wish to say to you; you shall see the figures if I have the strength to remember them; but listen to me, the money is really yours. This is the whole affair; white jet comes from Norway, black jet comes from England, and black glass imitation comes from Germany. Jet is lighter, more valuable, and dearer, but imitations can be made in France as well as in Germany. You must have a small anvil two inches square, and a



spirit-lamp to soften the wax. The wax used to be made with resin and lamp-black, and costs four francs the pound, but I hit on the idea of making it of shell-lac and turpentine. It only costs thirty sous, and is much better. The rings are made of violet glass fastened by means of the wax on a small black iron wire. The glass must be violet for iron ornaments, and black for gilt ornaments. Spain buys large quantities, it is the country of jet——"

Here he stopped, the pen slipped from his fingers, he burst into one of those despairing sobs which rose at times from the depths of his being; the poor man took his head between his hands and thought.

"Oh!" he exclaimed internally (lamentable cries heard by God alone), "it is all over. I shall never see her again; it is a smile which flashed across me, and I am going to enter night without even seeing her; oh! for one moment, for one instant to hear her voice, to touch her, to look at her, and then die. Death is nothing, but the frightful thing is to die without seeing her. She would smile on me, say a word to me, and would that do any one harm? No, it is all over, for ever. I am all alone, my God! my God! I shall see her no more."

At this moment there was a knock at his door.

## CHAPTER CXIX.

THAT same day, or to speak more correctly, that same evening, as Marius was leaving the dinner-table to withdraw to his study, having a brief to get up, Basque handed him a letter, saying, "The person who wrote the letter is in the anteroom." Cosette had taken her grandfather's arm, and was taking a turn round the garden. A letter may have an ugly appearance, like a man, and the mere sight of coarse paper and clumsy folding is displeasing. The letter which Basque brought was of that description. Marius took it, and it smelt of tobacco. Nothing arouses a recollection so much as a smell, and Marius recognised the tobacco. He looked at the address, "To Monsieur le Baron Pommerci. At his house." The recognised tobacco made him recognise the handwriting. It might be said that astonishment has its flashes of lightning, and Marius was, as it were, illumined by one of these flashes. The odour, that mysterious aid to memory, had recalled to him a world: it was really the

paper, the mode of folding, the pale ink, it was really the well-known handwriting, and, above all, it was the tobacco. The Jondrette garret rose again before him. Hence—strange blow of accident!—one of the two trails which he had so long sought, the one for which he had latterly made so many efforts and believed lost for ever, came to offer itself voluntarily to him. He eagerly opened the letter and read :

“ MONSIEUR LE BARON,—

“ If the Supreme Being had endowed me with talents, I might have been Baron Thénard, member of the Institute (academy of sciences), but I am not so, I merely bear the same name with him, and shall be happy if this reminiscence recommends me to the excellence of your kindness. The benefits with which you may honor me will be reciprocal, for I am in possession of a secret concerning an individual. This individual concerns you. I hold the secret at your disposal, as I desire to have the honor of being useful to you. I will give you the simple means for expelling from your honorable family this individual who has no right in it, Madam la Barronne being of high birth. The sanctuary of virtue could no longer cohabit with crime without abdicating.

“ I await in the anteroom the order of Monsieur le Baron.

“ Respectfully.”

The letter was signed “ THÉNARD.” This signature was not false, but only slightly abridged. However, the bombast and the orthography completed the revelation, the certificate of origin was perfect, and no doubt was possible. Marius’ emotion was profound ; and after the feeling of surprise, he had a feeling of happiness. Let him now find the other man he sought, the man who had saved him, Marius, and he would have nothing more to desire. He opened a drawer in his bureau, took out several bank-notes, which he put in his pocket, closed the bureau again, and rang. Basque opened the door partly.

“ Show the man in,” said Marius.

Basque announced :

“ M. Thénard.”

A man came in, and it was a fresh surprise for Marius, as the man he now saw was a perfect stranger to him. This man, who was old, by the way, had a large nose, his chin



in his cravat, green spectacles, with a double shade of green silk over his eyes, and his hair smoothed down and flattened on his forehead over his eyebrows, like the wigs of English coachmen of high life. His hair was gray. He was dressed in black from head to foot, a very seedy but clean black, and a bunch of seals, emerging from his fob, led to the supposition that he had a watch. He held an old hat in his hand, and walked bent, and the curve in his back augmented the depth of his bow. The thing which struck most at the first glance was that this person's coat, too large, though carefully buttoned, had not been made for him.

Had Marius been familiar with the occult institutions of Paris, he would have known of an old Jew, in the Rue Beautreillis, whose trade it was to supply rogues who wished to disguise themselves with the needful costume. In one of these borrowed suits, consisting, according to the Jew's catalogue of "a carefully-dressed peruke, green spectacles, bunch of seals, and two little quills an inch in length, wrapped in cotton," and intended to support the character of an ex-Ambassador, the visitor whom Basque had just shown was arrayed. Marius' disappointment, on seeing a different man from the one whom he expected enter, turned into dislike towards the new-comer. He examined him from head to foot, while the personage was giving him an exaggerated bow, and asked him curtly, "What do you want?"

The man replied with an amiable grin, of which the caressing smile of a crocodile would supply some idea :

"It appears to me impossible that I have not already had the honour of seeing Monsieur le Baron in society. I have a peculiar impression of having met you, my lord, a few years back, at the Princess Bagration's, and in the salons of his Excellency Vicomte Dambray, Peer of France."

It is always good tactics in swindling to pretend to recognise a person whom the swindler does not know. Marius paid attention to the man's words, he watched the action and movement, but his disappointment increased ; it was a nasal pronounciation, absolutely different from the sharp dry voice he expected. He was utterly routed.

"I do not know," he said, "either Madame Bagration or Monsieur Dambray. I never set foot in the house of either of them."

The answer was rough, but the personage continued with undiminished affability :

"Then it must have been at Chateaubriand's, my lord, that I saw you! I know Chateaubriand intimately, and he is a most affable man. He says to me sometimes, 'Thénard, my good friend, will you not drink a glass with me?'"

Marius' brow became sterner and sterner. "I never had the honour of being introduced to Monsieur de Chateaubriand. Come to the point, what do you want with me?"

The man bowed lower still before this harsh voice.

"Monsieur le Baron, deign to listen to me. There is in America, in a country near Panama, a village called La Joya, and this village is composed of a single house. A large square house three storeys high, built of bricks dried in the sun, each side of the square being five hundred feet long, and each storey retiring from the one under it for a distance of twelve feet, so as to leave in front of it a terrace which runs all round the house. In the centre is an inner court, in which provisions and ammunition are stored; there are no windows, only loopholes, no door, only ladders—ladders to mount from the ground to the first terrace, and from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, ladders to descend into the inner court; no doors to the rooms, only traps; no staircases to the apartments, only ladders. At night the trap-doors are closed, the ladders are drawn up, and blunderbusses and carbines are placed in the loopholes; there is no way of entering; it is a house by day, a citadel by night. Eight hundred inhabitants, such is this village. Why such precautions? Because the country is dangerous, and full of anthropophagi. Then why do people go there? Because it is a marvellous country, and gold is found there."

"What are you driving at?" Marius, who had passed from disappointment to impatience, interrupted.

"To this, Monsieur le Baron. I am a worn-out ex-diplomatist. I am sick of our old civilisation, and wish to try the savages."

"What next?"

"Monsieur le Baron, egotism is the law of the world. The proletarian peasant-wench who works by the day turns round when the diligence passes, but the peasant woman who is labouring on her own field does not turn. The poor man's dog barks after the rich, the rich man's dog barks after the poor; each for himself; and self-interest is the object of mankind. Gold is the magnet."

"What next? conclude."



"I should like to go and settle at La Joya. There are three of us. I have my wife and my daughter, a very beautiful girl. The voyage is long and expensive, and I am short of funds."

"How does that concern me?" Marius asked.

The stranger thrust his neck out of his cravat, with a gesture peculiar to the vulture, and said, with a more affable smile than before :

"Monsieur le Baron cannot have read my letter?"

That was almost true, and the fact is that the contents of the epistle had escaped Marius; he had seen the writing rather than read the letter, and he scarce remembered it. A new hint had just been given him, and he noticed the detail, "My wife and daughter." He fixed a penetrating glance on the stranger; a magistrate could not have done it better; but he confined himself to saying :

"Be more precise."

The stranger thrust his hands into his trousers' pockets, raised his head without straightening his back-bone, but in his turn scrutinising Marius through his green spectacles.

"Very good, Monsieur le Baron. I will be precise. I have a secret to sell you."

"Does it concern me?"

"Slightly."

"What is it?"

Marius more and more examined the man while listening.

"I will begin, gratis," the stranger said; "you will soon see that it is interesting."

"Speak."

"Monsieur le Baron, you have in your house a robber and assassin."

Marius gave a start.

"In my house? no," he said.

The stranger imperturbably brushed his hat with his arm, and went on :

"An assassin and robber. Remark, Monsieur le Baron, that I am not speaking here of old, forgotten facts, which might be effaced by prescription before the law—by repentance before God. I am speaking of recent facts, present facts, of facts still unknown to justice. I continue. This man has crept into your confidence, and almost into your family, under a false name. I am going to tell you his real name, and tell it you for nothing."

"I am listening."

"His name is Jean Valjean."

"I know it."

"I will tell, equally for nothing, who he is."

"Speak."

"He is an ex-convict."

"I know it."

"You have known it since I had the honour of telling you."

"No, I was aware of it before."

Marius' cold tone, this double reply, "I know it," and his refractory disinclination to speak, aroused some latent anger in the stranger, and he gave Marius a furious side-glance, which was immediately extinguished. Rapid though it was, the glance was one of those which are recognised if they have once been seen, and it did not escape Marius. Certain flashes can only come from certain souls; the eyeball, that cellar-door of the soul, is lit up by them, and green spectacles conceal nothing; you might as well put up a glass window to hell. The stranger continued, smiling:

"I will not venture to contradict Monsieur le Baron, but in any case you will see that I am well informed. Now, what I have to tell you is known to myself alone, and it affects the fortune of Madame la Baronne. It is an extraordinary secret, and is for sale. I offer it you first. Cheap, twenty thousand francs."

"I know that secret as I know the other," said Marius.

The personage felt the necessity of lowering his price a little.

"Monsieur le Baron, let us say ten thousand francs, and I will speak."

"I repeat to you that you have nothing to tell me. I know what you want to say to me."

There was a fresh flash in the man's eye, as he continued:

"Still I must dine to-day. It is an extraordinary secret, I tell you. Monsieur, I am going to speak. I am speaking. Give me twenty francs."

Marius looked at him fixedly.

"I know your extraordinary secret, just as I knew Jean Valjean's name, and as I know yours."

"My name?"

"Yes."

"That is not difficult, Monsieur le Baron, for I had the honour of writing it and mentioning it to you. Thénard—"

"—dier."



"What?"

"Thénardier."

"What does this mean?"

In danger the porcupine bristles, the beetle feigns death, the old guard forms a square: this man began laughing. Then he flipped a grain of dust off his coat sleeve. Marius continued:

"You are also the workman Jondrette, the actor Fabantou, the poet Genflot, the Spanish Don Alvares, and Madame Balizard."

"Madame who?"

"And you once kept a pot-house at Montfermeil."

"A pot-house! never."

"And I tell you that you are Thénardier."

"I deny it."

"And that you are a scoundrel. Take that."

And Marius, taking a bank-note from his pocket, threw it in his face.

"Five hundred francs! Monsieur le Baron!"

And the man, overwhelmed and bowing, clutched the note and examined it.

"Five hundred francs," he continued, quite dazzled.

And he stammered half aloud, "No counterfeit."

Then suddenly exclaimed:

"Well, be it so; let us be at our ease."

And with monkey-like dexterity, throwing back his hair, tearing off his spectacles, and removing the two quills to which we alluded just now, and which we have seen before in another part of this book, he took off his face as you or I take off our hat. His eye grew bright, the forehead, hideously wrinkled at top, became smooth, the nose sharp as a beak, and the ferocious and sagacious profile of the man of prey reappeared.

"Monsieur le Baron is infallible," he said in a sharp voice, from which the nasal twang had entirely disappeared; "I am Thénardier."

And he drew up his curved back.

Thénardier, for it was really he, was strangely surprised; he would have been troubled could he have been so. He had come to bring astonishment, and it was he himself who underwent it. This humiliation was paid for with five hundred francs, and he accepted it; but he was not the less stunned. He saw for the first time this Baron Pontmercy, and in spite of his disguise this Baron Pontmercy recognised

him, and recognised him thoroughly; and not alone was this baron acquainted with Thénardier, but he also seemed acquainted with Jean Valjean. Who was this almost beardless young man, so cold and so generous; who knew people's names, knew all their names, and opened his purse to them; who bullied rogues like a judge, and paid them like a dupe? Thénardier, it will be remembered, though he had been Marius' neighbour, had never seen him, which is frequently the case in Paris; he had formerly vaguely heard his daughter speak of a very poor young man of the name of Marius, who lived in the house, and he had written him, without knowing him, the letter we formerly read. No approximation between this Marius and M. le Baron Pontmercy was possible in his mind.

However, he had managed through his daughter Azelma, whom he put on the track of the married couple on February 16th, and by his own researches, to learn a good many things, and in his dark den had succeeded in seizing more than one mysterious thread. He had by sheer industry discovered, or at least by the inductive process had divined, who the man was whom he had met on a certain day in the Grand Sewer. From the man he had easily arrived at the name, and he knew that Madame la Baronne Pontmercy was Cosette. But on that point he intended to be discreet; who Cosette was he did not know exactly himself. He certainly got a glimpse of some bastardism, and Fantine's story had always appeared to him doubtful. But what was the good of speaking? to have his silence paid? He had, or fancied he had, something better to sell than that, and according to all expectation, to go and make to Baron Pontmercy, without further proof, the revelation, "Your wife is only a bastard," would only have succeeded in attracting the husband's boot to the broadest part of his person.

In Thénardier's thoughts the conversation with Marius had not yet begun; he had been obliged to fall back, modify his strategy, leave a position, and make a change of front; but nothing essential was as yet compromised, and he had five hundred francs in his pocket. Moreover, he had something decisive to tell, and he felt himself strong even against this Baron Pontmercy, who was so well informed and so well armed. For men of Thénardier's nature every dialogue is a combat, and what was his situation in the one which was about to begin? He did not know to whom he was



speaking; but he knew of what he was speaking. He rapidly made this mental review of his forces, and after saying, "I am Thénardier," waited. Marius was deep in thought; he at length held Thénardier, and the man whom he had so eagerly desired to find again was before him. He would be able at last to honour Colonel Pontmercy's recommendation. It humiliated him that that hero owed anything to this bandit, and that the bill of exchange drawn by his father from the tomb upon him, Marius, had remained up to this day protested. It seemed to him, too, in the complex state of his mind as regarded Thénardier, that he was bound to avenge the colonel for the misfortune of having been saved by such a villain. But, however this might be, he was satisfied; he was at length going to free the colonel's shadow from this unworthy creditor, and he felt as if he were releasing his father's memory from a debtor's prison. By the side of this duty he had another, clearing up if possible the source of Cosette's fortune. The opportunity appeared to present itself, for Thénardier probably knew something, and it might be useful to see to the bottom of this man; so he began with that. Thénardier put away the "no counter-felt" carefully in his pocket, and looked at Marius with almost tender gentleness. Marius was the first to break the silence.

"Thénardier, I have told you your name, and now do you wish me to tell you the secret which you have come to impart to me? I have my information also, and you shall see that I know more than you do. Jean Valjean, as you said, is an assassin and a robber. A robber, because he plundered a rich manufacturer, M. Madeleine, whose ruin he caused: an assassin, because he murdered Inspector Javert."

"I do not understand you, M. le Baron," said Thénardier.

"I will make you understand; listen. There was in a bailiwick of the Pas de Calais, about the year 1822, a man who had been in some trouble with the authorities, and who had rehabilitated and restored himself under the name of Monsieur Madeleine. This man had become, in the fullest extent of the term, a just man, and he made the fortune of an entire town by a trade, the manufacture of black beads. As for his private fortune, he had made that too, but secondarily, and to some extent as occasion offered. He was the foster-father of the poor, he founded hospitals, opened schools, visited the sick, dowered girls, supported widows, adopted orphans, and was, as it were, guardian

of the town. He had refused the Cross, and was appointed mayor. A liberated convict knew the secret of a penalty formerly incurred by this man; he denounced and had him arrested, and took advantage of the arrest to come to Paris and draw out of Laffitte's—I have the facts from the cashier himself—by means of a false signature, a sum of half a million and more, which belonged to M. Madeleine. The convict who robbed M. Madeleine was Jean Valjean; as for the other act, you can tell me no more than I know either. Jean Valjean killed Inspector Javert with a pistol-shot, and I, who am speaking to you, was present."

Thénardier gave Marius the sovereign glance of a beaten man who sets his hand again on the victory, and has regained in a minute all the ground he had lost. But the smile at once returned, for the inferior, when in the presence of his superior, must keep his triumph to himself, and Thénardier confined himself to saying to Marius:

"Monsieur le Baron, we are on the wrong track."

And he emphasised this sentence by giving his bunch of seals an expressive twirl.

"What!" Marius replied, "do you dispute it? They are facts."

"They are chimeras. The confidence with which Monsieur le Baron honours me makes it my duty to tell him so. Before all, truth and justice, and I do not like to see people accused wrongfully. Monsieur le Baron, Jean Valjean did not rob M. Madeleine, and Jean Valjean did not kill Javert."

"That is rather strong. How is that?"

"For two reasons."

"What are they? speak."

"The first is this: he did not rob M. Madeleine, because Jean Valjean himself is M. Madeleine."

"What nonsense are you talking?"

"And this is the second: he did not assassinate Javert, because the man who killed Javert was Javert."

"What do you mean?"

"That Javert committed suicide."

"Prove it, prove it," Marius cried wildly.

Thénardier repeated slowly, scanning his sentence after the fashion of an ancient Alexandrian:

"Police-Agent-Javert-was-found-drowned-un-der-a-boat-at-Pont-au-Change."



"But prove it, then."

Thénardier drew from his side-pocket a large gray paper parcel, which seemed to contain folded papers of various sizes.

"I have my proofs," he said calmly, and he added :

"Monsieur le Baron, I wished to know Jean Valjean thoroughly on your behalf. I say that Jean Valjean and Madeleine are the same, and I say that Javert had no other assassin but Javert, and when I say this, I have the proofs, not MS. proofs, for writing is suspicious and complaisant, but printed proofs."

While speaking, Thénardier extracted from the parcel two newspapers, yellow, faded, and tremendously saturated with tobacco. One of these two papers, broken in all the folds, and falling in square rags, seemed much older than the other.

"Two facts, two proofs," said Thénardier, as he handed Marius the two open newspapers.

These two papers the reader knows ; one, the older, a number of the *Drapeau Blanc*, for July 25th, 1823, of which the exact text was given at p. 275, established the identity of M. Madeleine and Jean Valjean. The other, a *Moniteur*, of June 15th, 1832, announced the suicide of Javert, adding that it was found from a verbal report made by Javert to the Prefect, that he had been made prisoner at the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and owed his life to the magnanimity of an insurgent, who, when holding him under his pistol, instead of blowing out his brains, fired in the air. Marius read ; there was evidence, a certain date, irrefragable proof, for these two papers had not been printed expressly to support Thénardier's statement, and the note published in the *Moniteur* was officially communicated by the Prefecture of Police. Marius could no longer doubt ; the cashier's information was false, and he was himself mistaken. Jean Valjean, suddenly growing taller, issued from the cloud, and Marius could not restrain a cry of joy.

"What, then, this fellow is an admirable man ! all this fortune is really his ! He is Madeleine, the providence of an entire town ! he is Jean Valjean, the saviour of Javert ! he is a hero ! he is a saint !"

"He is not a saint, and he is not a hero," said Thénardier, "he is an assassin and a robber."

And he added with the accent of a man beginning to feel

himself possessed of some authority, "Let us calm ourselves."

Robber, assassin, those words which Marius believed had disappeared, and which had returned, fell upon him like an icy douche.

"Still——" he said.

"Still," said Thénardier, "Jean Valjean did not rob M. Madeleine, but he is a robber; he did not assassinate Javert, but he is an assassin."

"Are you alluding," Marius continued, "to that wretched theft committed forty years back, and expiated, as is proved from those very papers, by a whole life of repentance, self-denial, and virtue?"

"I say assassination and robbery, M. le Baron, and repeat that I am alluding to recent facts. What I have to reveal to you is perfectly unknown and unpublished, and you may perhaps find in it the source of the fortune cleverly offered by Jean Valjean to Madame la Baronne. I say skilfully, for it would not be a stupid act, by a donation of that nature, to step into an honourable house, whose comforts he would share, and at the same time hide his crime, enjoy his robbery, bury his name, and create a family."

"I could interrupt you here," Marius observed, "but go on."

"Monsieur le Baron, I will tell you all, leaving the reward to your generosity, for the secret is worth its weight in gold. You will say to me, 'Why not apply to Jean Valjean?' For a very simple reason. I know that he has given up all his property in your favour, and I consider the combination ingenious; but he has not a halfpenny left; he would show me his empty hands, and as I want money for my voyage to La Joya, I prefer you, who have everything, to him, who has nothing. As I am rather fatigued, permit me to take a chair."

Marius sat down, and made him a sign to do the same. Thénardier installed himself in an easy-chair, took up the newspapers, put them back in the parcel, and muttered as he dug his nail into the *Drapeau Blanc*: "It cost me a deal of trouble to procure this." This done, he crossed his legs, threw himself into the chair in the attitude of men who are certain of what they are stating, and then began his narrative gravely, and laying a stress on his words:

"Monsieur le Baron, on June 6th, 1832, about a year



ago, and on the day of the riots, a man was in the great sewer of Paris, at the point where the sewer falls into the Seine between the Pont des Invalides and the Pont de Jena."

Marius hurriedly drew his chair closer to Thénardier's. Thénardier noticed this movement, and continued with the slowness of an orator who holds his hearer, and feels his adversary quivering under his words :

"This man, forced to hide himself, for reasons, however, unconnected with politics, had selected the sewer as his domicile, and had the key of it. It was, I repeat, June 6th, and at about eight in the evening the man heard a noise in the sewer ; feeling greatly surprised, he concealed himself and watched. It was a sound of footsteps ; some one was walking in the darkness, and coming in his direction ; strange to say, there was another man beside himself in the sewer. As the outlet of the sewer was no great distance off, a little light which passed through enabled him to see the new-comer, and that he was carrying something on his back. He walked in a stooping posture ; he was an ex-convict, and what he had on his shoulders was a corpse. A flagrant case of assassination, were there ever one ; as for the robbery, that is a matter of course, for no one kills a man gratis. This convict was going to throw the body into the river, and a fact worth notice is, that, before reaching the outlet, the convict, who had come a long way through the sewer, was obliged to pass a frightful hole, in which it seems as if he might have left the corpse ; but the sewer-men who came to effect the repairs next day would have found the murdered man there, and that did not suit the assassin. Hence he preferred carrying the corpse across the slough, and his efforts must have been frightful ; it was impossible to put one's life in greater peril, and I do not understand how he got out of it alive."

Marius' chair came nearer, and Thénardier took advantage of it to draw a long breath ; then he continued :

"Monsieur le Baron, a sewer is not the Champs de Mars ; everything is wanting there, even space, and when two men are in it together they must meet. This happened, and the domiciled man and the passer-by were compelled to bid each other good-evening, to their mutual regret. The passer-by said to the domiciled man, 'You see what

I have on my back. I must go out, you have the key, so give it to me.' This convict was a man of terrible strength, and there was no chance of refusing him; still the man who held the key parleyed, solely to gain time. He examined the dead man, but could see nothing, except that he was young, well dressed, had a rich look, and was quite disfigured with blood. While talking, he managed to tear off, without the murderer perceiving it, a piece of the skirt of the victim's coat, as a convincing proof, you understand, a means of getting on the track of the affair, and bringing the crime home to the criminal. He placed the piece of cloth in his pocket; after which he opened the grating, allowed the man with the load on his back to go out, locked the grating again, and ran away, not feeling at all desirous to be mixed up any further in the adventure, or to be present when the assassin threw the corpse into the river. You now understand; the man who carried the corpse was Jean Valjean, the one who had the key is speaking to you at this moment, and the piece of coat-skirt——"

Thénardier completed the sentence by drawing from his pocket and holding level with his eyes a ragged piece of black cloth, all covered with dark spots. Marius had risen, pale, scarce breathing, with his eye fixed on the black patch, and, without uttering a syllable, or without taking his eyes off the rag, he fell back, and, with his right hand extended behind him, felt for the key of a wall-cupboard near the mantelpiece. He found this key, opened the cupboard, and thrust his hand into it without looking or once taking his eyes off the rag which Thénardier displayed. In the meanwhile Thénardier continued:

"Monsieur le Baron, I have the strongest grounds for believing that the assassinated young man was a wealthy foreigner, drawn by Jean Valjean into a trap, and carrying an enormous sum about him."

"I was the young man, and here is the coat!" cried Marius, as he threw on the floor an old bloodstained surtout. Then, taking the patch from Thénardier's hands, he bent over the coat and put it in its place in the skirt; the rent fitted exactly, and the fragment completed the coat. Thénardier was petrified, and thought, "I'm sold." Marius drew himself up, shuddering, desperate, and flashing; he felt in his pocket, and walking



furiously towards Thénardier, thrust almost into his face his hand full of five hundred and thousand franc notes.

"You are an infamous wretch! you are a liar, a calumniator, and a villain! You came to accuse that man, and you have justified him; you came to ruin him, and have only succeeded in glorifying him. And it is you who are the robber! it is you who are an assassin! I saw you, Thénardier Jondrette, at that den on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. I know enough about you to send you to the galleys, and even further if I liked. There are a thousand francs, ruffian that you are!"

And he threw a thousand-franc note at Thénardier.

"Ah, Jondrette—Thénardier, vile scoundrel, let this serve you as a lesson, you hawker of secrets, you dealer in mysteries, you searcher in the darkness, you villain, take these five hundred francs, and be off. Waterloo protects you."

"Waterloo!" Thénardier growled, as he pocketed the five hundred francs.

"Yes, assassin! you saved there the life of a colonel."

"A general!" Thénardier said, raising his head.

"A colonel," Marius repeated furiously; "I would not give a farthing for a general. And you come here to commit an infamy! I tell you that you have committed every crime! Begone! disappear! Be happy, that is all I desire! Ah, monster! here are three thousand francs more: take them. You will start to-morrow for America with your daughter, for your wife is dead, you abominable liar! I will watch over your departure, bandit, and at the moment when you set sail, pay you twenty thousand francs. Go and get hanged elsewhere."

"Monsieur le Baron," Thénardier answered, bowing to the ground, "accept my eternal gratitude."

And Thénardier left the room, understanding nothing of all this, but stupefied and transported by this sweet crushing under bags of gold, and this lightning flashing over his head in the shape of bank-notes. Let us finish at once with this man. Two days after the events we have just recorded he started for America, under a false name, with his daughter Azelma, and provided with an order on a New York banker for twenty thousand francs. The

moral misery of Thénardier, the spoiled bourgeois, was irremediable, and he was in America what he had been in Europe. The contact with a wicked man is sometimes sufficient to rot a good action, and to make something bad issue from it: with Marius' money Thénardier turned slave-dealer.

So soon as Thénardier had departed, Marius ran into the garden where Cosette was still walking.

"Cosette, Cosette," he cried, "come, come quickly, let us be off. Basque, a hackney-coach. Cosette, come! Heavens! it was he who saved my life! Let us not lose a minute! Put on your shawl."

Cosette thought him mad, and obeyed. He could not breathe, and laid his hand on his heart to check its beating. He walked up and down with long strides, and embraced Cosette. "Oh, Cosette," he said, "I am a scoundrel." Marius was amazed, for he was beginning to catch a glimpse of some strange, lofty, and sombre figure in this Jean Valjean. An extraordinary virtue appeared to him, supreme and gentle, and humble in its immensity, and the convict was transfigured into Christ. Marius was dazzled by this prodigy, and though he knew not exactly what he saw, it was grand. In an instant the hackney-coach was at the gate. Marius helped Cosette in, and followed her.

"Driver," he cried, "No. 7 Rue de l'Homme Armé."

"Oh, how glad I am," said Cosette. "Rue de l'Homme Armé. I did not dare speak to you about Monsieur Jean, but we are going to see him."

"Your father, Cosette! your father more than ever. Cosette, I see it all. You told me that you never received the letter I sent you by Gavroche. It must have fallen into his hands, Cosette, and he came to the barricade to save me. As it is his sole duty to be an angel, in passing he saved others: he saved Javert. He drew me out of that gulf to give me to you; he carried me on his back through that frightful sewer. Ah! I am a monstrous ingrate! Cosette, after having been your providence, he was mine. Just imagine that there was a horrible pit, in which a man could be drowned a hundred times, drowned in mud, Cosette; and he carried me through it. I had fainted; I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I could not know anything about my own adventures. We are going to bring him back with us, and whether he is willing or not he shall



never leave us again. I only hope he is at home ! I only hope we shall find him ! I will spend the rest of my life in revering him. Yes, it must have been so, Cosette, and Gavroche must have given him my letter. That explains everything. You understand."

Cosette did not understand a word

"You are right," she said to him.

## CHAPTER CXX.

At the knock he heard at his door Jean Valjean turned round.

"Come in," he said feebly.

The door opened, and Cosette and Marius appeared. Cosette rushed into the room. Marius remained on the threshold, leaning against the door-post.

"Cosette!" said Jean Valjean, and he sat up in his chair, with his arms outstretched and opened, haggard, livid, and sinister, but with an immense joy in his eyes. Cosette, suffocated with emotion, fell on Jean Valjean's breast.

"Father," she said.

Jean Valjean, utterly overcome, stammered, "Cosette! she—you—madame! it is you! oh, my God!"

And clasped in Cosette's arms, he exclaimed:

"It is you! you are here; you forgive me, then!"

Marius, drooping his eyelids to keep his tears from flowing, advanced a step, and muttered between his lips, which were convulsively clenched to stop his sobs:

"Father!"

"And you, too, you forgive me," said Jean Valjean.

Marius could not find a word to say, and Jean Valjean added, "Thank you." Cosette took off her shawl, and threw her bonnet on the bed.

"It is in my way," she said.

And sitting down on the old man's knees, she parted his gray hair with an adorable movement, and kissed his forehead. Jean Valjean, who was wandering, let her do so. Cosette, who only comprehended very vaguely, redoubled her caresses, as if she wished to pay Marius' debt, and Jean Valjean stammered:

"How foolish a man can be! I fancied that I should not see her again. Just imagine, Monsieur Pontmercy, that at the very moment when you came in I was saying, 'It is all over.' There is her little dress. 'I am a wretched man, I shall not see Cosette again,' I was saying at the very moment when you were coming up the stairs. What an idiot I was! a man can be as idiotic as that! But people count without le bon Dieu, who says,—'Men imagine that they are going to be abandoned; no; things will not happen like that. Down below there is a poor old fellow who wants an angel.' And the angel comes, and he sees



Cosette again, and he sees his little Cosette again. Oh ! I was very unhappy."

For a moment he was unable to speak, then he went on :

"I really wanted to see Cosette for a little while every now and then, for a heart requires a bone to gnaw. Still, I felt plainly that I was in the way. I said to myself, They do not want you, so stop in your corner ; a man has no right to pay everlasting visits. Ah ! blessed be God ! I see her again. Do you know, Cosette, that your husband is very handsome ? What a pretty embroidered collar you are wearing, I like that pattern ; your husband chose it, did he not ? And, then, you will need cashmere shawls. Monsieur Pontmercy, let me call her Cosette, it will not be for long."

And Cosette replied :

"How unkind to have left us like that ! where have you been to ? why were you away so long ? Formerly, your absences did not last over three or four days. I sent Nicolette, and the answer always was, 'He has not returned.' When did you get back ? why did you not let us know ? are you aware that you are greatly changed ? Oh, naughty papa, he has been ill, and we did not know it. Here, Marius, feel how cold his hand is !"

"So you are here ! so you forgive me, Monsieur Pontmercy ?" Jean Valjean repeated.

At this remark, all that was swelling in Marius' heart found a vent, and he burst forth :

"Do you hear, Cosette ? he asks my pardon. And do you know what he did for me, Cosette ? He saved my life, he did more, he gave you to me, and, after saving me, and after giving you to me, Cosette, what did he do for himself ? He sacrificed himself ; that is the man. And to me, who am so ungrateful, so pitiless, so forgetful, and so guilty, he says, 'Thank you !' Cosette, my whole life spent at this man's feet would be too little. That barricade, that sewer, that furnace, that pit, he went through them all for me and for you, Cosette ! He carried me through every form of death, which he held at bay from me and accepted for himself. This man possesses every courage, every virtue, every heroism, and every holiness, and he is an angel, Cosette."

"Stop, stop !" Jean Valjean said in a whisper ; "why talk in that way ?"

"But why did you not tell me of it ?" exclaimed Marius, with a passion in which was veneration ; "it is your fault

also. You save people's lives, and conceal the fact from them ! You do more ; under the pretext of unmasking yourself, you calumniate yourself. It is frightful."

"I told the truth," Jean Valjean replied.

"No," Marius retorted, "the truth is the whole truth, and you did not tell that. You were Monsieur Madeleine, why not tell me so ? You saved Javert, why not tell me so ? I owed my life to you, why not tell me so ?"

"Because I thought like you, and found that you were right. It was necessary that I should leave you. Had you known of the sewer you would have compelled me to remain with you, and hence I held my tongue. Had I spoken, I should have been in the way."

"Been in the way of whom ? of what ?" Marius broke out. "Do you fancy that you are going to remain here ? We mean to take you back with us. Oh ! good heavens ! when I think that I only learnt all this by accident ! We shall take you away with us, for you form a part of ourselves ; you are her father and mine. You shall not spend another day in this frightful house, so do not fancy you will be here to-morrow."

"To-morrow," said Jean Valjean, "I shall be no longer here, but I shall not be at your house."

"What do you mean ?" Marius asked. "Oh ! no, we shall not let you travel any more ; you shall not leave us again, for you belong to us, and we will not let you go."

"This time it is for good," Cosette added. "We have a carriage below, and I mean to carry you off ; if necessary, I shall employ force."

And, laughing, she feigned to raise the old man in her arms.

"Your room is still all ready in our house," she went on. "If you only knew how pretty the garden is just at present ! the azaleas are getting on splendidly ; the walks are covered with river sand, and there are little violet shells. You shall eat my strawberries, for it is I who water them. And no more madame and no more Monsieur Jean, for we live in a Republic, do we not, Marius ? The programme is changed. If you only knew, father, what a sorrow I had ; a redbreast had made its nest in a hole in the wall, and a horrible cat killed it for me. My poor, pretty little redbreast, that used to thrust its head out of its window and look at me ! I cried over it, and could have killed the cat ! But now, nobody weeps, everybody laughs, everybody is happy. You will



come with us ; how pleased grandfather will be ! You will have your bed in the garden, you will cultivate it, and we will see whether your strawberries are as fine as mine. And, then, I will do all you wish, and you will obey me."

Jean Valjean listened without hearing ; he heard the music of her voice rather than the meaning of her words and one of those heavy tears, which are the black pearl of the soul, slowly collected in his eye. He murmured :

"The proof that God is good is that she is here."

"My father !" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean continued :

"It is true it would be charming to live together. They have their trees full of birds, and I should walk about with Cosette. It is sweet to be with persons who live, who say to each other good-morning, and call each other in the garden. We should each cultivate a little bed, she would give me her strawberries to eat, and I would let her pick my roses. It would be delicious, but——"

He broke off, and said gently, "It is a pity."

The tear did not fall, it was recalled, and Jean Valjean substituted a smile for it. Cosette took both the old man's hands in hers.

"My God !" she said, "your hands have grown colder. Can you be ill ? are you suffering ?"

"I—no," Jean Valjean replied, "I am quite well. It is only——" He stopped.

"Only what ?"

"I am going to die directly."

Marius and Cosette shuddered.

"Die !" Marius exclaimed.

"Yes, but that is nothing," said Jean Valjean.

He breathed, smiled, and added :

"Cosette, you were talking to me, go on, speak again. Your redbreast is dead, then ? speak, that I may hear your voice."

Marius, who was petrified, looked at the old man, and Cosette uttered a piercing shriek.

"Father, father, you will live ! you are going to live. Insist on your living, do you hear ?"

Jean Valjean raised his head to her, with adoration.

"Oh yes, forbid me dying. Who knows ? Perhaps, I shall obey. I was on the road to death when you arrived, but that stopped me. I fancied I was recovering."

"You are full of strength and life," Marius exclaimed

"Can you suppose that a man dies like that? You have known grief, but you shall know no more. It is I who ask pardon of you, and on my knees! You are going to live, and live with us, and live a long time. We will take you with us, and shall have henceforth but one thought, your happiness!"

"You hear," said Cosette, who was weeping fearfully, "Marius says that you will not die."

Jean Valjean continued to smile.

"Even if you were to take me home with you, Monsieur Pontmercy, would that prevent me being what I am? No. God has thought the same as you and I, and He does not alter His opinion. It is better for me to be gone. Death is an excellent arrangement, and God knows better than we do what we want. I am certain that it is right, that you should be happy, that Monsieur Pontmercy should have Cosette, that youth should espouse the dawn, that there should be around you, my children, lilacs and nightingales, that your life should be a lawn bathed in sunlight, that all the enchantments of heaven should fill your souls, and that I who am good for nothing should now die. Come, be reasonable; nothing is possible now, and I fully feel that all is over. An hour ago I had a fainting-fit, and last night I drank the whole of that jug of water. How kind your husband is, Cosette! You are much better with him than with me!"

There was a noise at the door; it was the physician come to pay his visit.

"Good-day, and good-bye, doctor," said Jean Valjean. "Here are my poor children."

Marius went up to the physician, and addressed but one word to him, "Sir?"—but in the manner of pronouncing it there was a whole question. The physician answered the question by an expressive glance.

"Because things are unpleasant," said Jean Valjean, "that is no reason to be unjust to God."

There was a silence, and every chest was oppressed. Jean Valjean turned to Cosette, and began contemplating her, as if he wished to take the glance with him into eternity. In the deep shadow into which he had already sunk ecstasy was still possible for him in regarding Cosette. The reflection of her sweet countenance illumined his pale face, for the sepulchre may have its brilliancy. The physician felt his pulse.



"Ah, it was you that he wanted," he said, looking at Marius and Cosette.

And bending down to Marius' ear, he whispered, "Too late."

Jean Valjean, almost without ceasing to regard Cosette, looked at Marius and the physician with serenity, and the scarcely articulated words could be heard pass his lips.

"It is nothing to die, but it is frightful not to live."

All at once he rose—such return of strength is at times a sequel of the death-agony. He walked with a firm step to the wall, thrust aside Marius and the doctor, who wished to help him, detached from the wall the small copper crucifix hanging on it, returned to his seat with all the vigour of full health, and said, as he laid the crucifix on the table :

"There is the great Martyr."

Then his chest sank in, his head vacillated, as if the intoxication of the tomb were seizing on him, and his hands, lying on his knees, began pulling at the cloth of his trousers. Cosette supported his shoulders and sobbed, and tried to speak to him, but was unable to do so. Through the words mingled with that lugubrious saliva which accompanies tears, such sentences as this could be distinguished : "Father, do not leave us. Is it possible that we have only found you again to lose you?" It might be said that the death-agony moves like a serpent ; it comes, goes, advances toward the grave, and then turns back toward life ; there is groping in the action of death. Jean Valjean, after this partial syncope, rallied, shook his forehead as if to make the darkness fall off it, and became again almost quite livid. He caught hold of Cosette's sleeve and kissed it.

"He is recovering, doctor, he is recovering," Marius cried.

"You are both good," said Jean Valjean, "and I am going to tell you what causes me sorrow. It causes me sorrow, Monsieur Pontmercy, that you have refused to touch that money, but it is really your wife's. I will explain to you, my children, and that is why I am so glad to see you. Black jet comes from England, and white jet from Norway ; it is all in that paper there which you will read. I invented the substitution of rolled-up snaps for welded snaps in bracelets ; they are prettier, better, and not so dear. You can understand what money can be earned by it ; so Cosette's fortune is really hers. I give you these details that your mind may be at rest !"

The porter's wife had come up, and was peeping through the open door; the physician sent her off, but could not prevent the zealous old woman shouting to the dying man before she went.

"Will you have a priest?"

"I have one," Jean Valjean answered.

And he seemed to point with his finger to a spot over his head, where he might have been fancied to see some one; it is probable, in truth, that the Bishop was present at this death scene. Cosette gently placed a pillow behind Jean Valjean's loins, and he continued:

"Monsieur Pontmercy, have no fears, I conjure you. The six hundred thousand francs really belong to Cosette. My whole life would have been wasted if you had not employed them. We have made those beads beautifully even in competition with what is called Berlin jewellery. For instance, the black beads of Germany are unequalled, for a gross, containing twelve hundred well-cut beads, costs only three francs."

When a being dear to us is at the point of death we look at him with a glance that holds him and would retain him with us. The two dumb with anguish, not knowing what to say to death, trembling and in despair, stood before him hand in hand. With each moment Jean Valjean declined and approached nearer to the dark horizon. His face grew livid, though he smiled. Life was no longer there, but there was something else. His breath failed, but his glance expanded. He was a corpse on whom the wings could be seen.

He made a sign to Cosette to approach, and then to Marius. Clearly it was the last minute of the last hour, and he began to speak to them in a voice so feeble that it seemed to come from a distance, and it seemed as if there were a wall between them and him.

"Come near, come near, both of you. I love you dearly. Oh, how good it is to die like this! You, too, love me, my Cosette. I was always sure you had a fondness for the poor old man. You will weep for me a little, won't you? But not too much, for I do not wish you to feel real sorrow. You must amuse yourselves greatly, my children. I forgot to tell you that more profit was made on the buckles without tongues than on all the rest. The gross, twelve dozen, cost ten francs to produce, and sold for sixty. Truly it was good business. You must not be astonished at the six hundred thousand francs, Monsieur Pontmercy. It is honest money. You



can be rich without any fear. You must have a carriage, a box at the opera from time to time, fine ball dresses, my Cosette; give good dinners to your friends, and be very happy.

"I was writing just now to Cosette. She will find my letter. To her I leave the two candlesticks on the mantelpiece. They are silver, but to me they are made of gold, of diamonds. They change the candles placed in them into consecrated tapers. I do not know if the man who gave me them is satisfied with me from on high. I have done what I could. You will not forget, children, that I am a poor man, and you will bury me in some corner with a stone to mark the place. I wish it. But no name on the stone. If only Cosette will come now and again to the spot, I shall be happy.

"You, too, Monsieur Pontmercy. I must own that I did not always like you. I ask your pardon. Now, you and she are only one for me. I am very grateful to you, for I feel that you will make Cosette happy. If you only knew, Monsieur Pontmercy, how her rose-pink cheeks were all my joy, and how miserable I was if she were but a little pale. There is in the chest of drawers a five-hundred franc bank-note. I have not touched it. It is for the poor. Cosette, do you see your little dress there on the bed? Do you remember it? And yet it was only ten years ago. How time flies!

"We have been very happy. Now it is over. Do not weep, my children, I am not going very far, and I shall see you from there. You will only have to look when it is night, and you will see me smile. Cosette, do you remember Montfermeil? You were in the wood, and very frightened. Do you remember when I took the handle of the bucket? It was the first time I touched your poor little hand. How cold it was! Ah, you had red hands then, miss, but now they are white enough. And the big doll! you remember? You called it Catherine, and were sorry you had not taken it with you to the convent. How many times you have made me laugh, my sweet angel! When it had rained you used to set straws afloat in the gutter and watch them go. One day I gave you a wicker racket and a shuttlecock with yellow, blue, and green feathers. You have forgotten it! You were so jolly when you were a little girl. How you played! And how you would place cherries in your ears!

"But these things are all over. The forests through which I walked with my child, the trees under which we

have passed, the convent where we hid, the games and the happy laughter of infancy, all are but shadows. I imagined that these belonged to me, and I was stupid to do so.

"The Thénardiens were very wicked, but we must forgive them. Cosette, the time has now come to tell you the name of your mother. She was called Fantine. Remember this name: Fantine. Fall on your knees every time you pronounce it. She suffered terribly, and she loved you dearly. She knew as much of sorrow as you of happiness. Such are the distributions of God. He is above, He sees us all, and knows what He does amid His great stars. I am going, my children. Love each other dearly and always. Love—there is hardly any other thing in the world but that. Think sometimes of the poor old man who died here. Ah, my Cosette, it is not my fault that I did not see you all that time, for it broke my heart. I went as far as the corner of the street, and must have produced a strange effect upon those who saw me pass, for I was as if mad, and once even went out without my hat. I can no longer see clearly, my children, and I had still several things to say to you. But 'tis all the same. Think of me a little. You are blessed beings. I do not know what is the matter with me, but I see light. Come closer. I die happy. Let me lay my hands on your dearly beloved heads."

Cosette and Marius fell upon their knees, broken-hearted and choked with sobs, each under one of Jean Valjean's hands. Those reverend hands did not move again.

He fell back, and the light from the two candles illumined him. His white face looked up to heaven, and he let Cosette and Marius cover his hands with kisses. He was dead.

The night was starless and intensely dark. Without doubt, in the darkness, some great angel with outspread wings stood waiting for his soul.



## CHAPTER CXXI.

THERE is, in the cemetery of Père Lachaise, in the neighbourhood of the poor side, far from the fashionable quarter of this city of tombs, far from those fantastic sepulchres, which blazon in the presence of eternity the hideous fashions of death; in a deserted corner alongside an old wall, under a lofty yew upon which bindweed climbs, and amid couch-grass and moss, a tombstone. This stone is no more exempt than others from the ravages of time. Water turns it green, and the atmosphere blackens it. It is not near any path, and people do not care to visit that part because the grass is long and they get their feet wet. When there is a little sunshine, lizards disport themselves on it. All around there is the rustling of wild oats, and in the spring linnets sing on the trees.

The tombstone is quite bare. They did not dream of cutting more than was necessary for a tomb, and no further care was taken than to make the stone long enough and narrow enough to cover a man.

No name appears on it. \*

Only, many, many years ago a hand wrote upon it in pencil these four lines which through rain and dust became almost illegible, and which to-day are probably effaced :

Here sleeps a man whose lot was passing strange  
The whiles he lived. His loved one gone, death came  
Ev'n as the darkness of approaching night  
Comes swift upon the waning of the day.

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